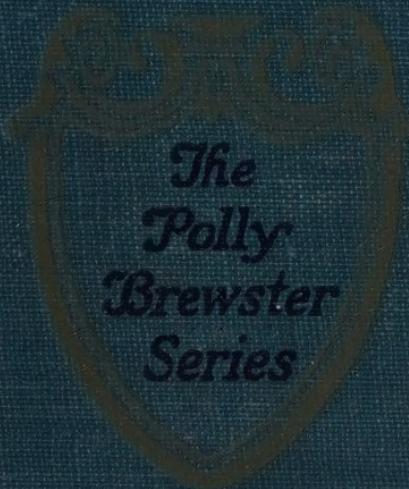


POLLY IN EGYPT



LILLIAN ELIZABETH ROY



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POLLY IN EGYPT



POLLY LOWERED THE BOTTLE INTO THE CART.

Polly in Egypt.

Frontispiece (Page 33)

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POLLY IN EGYPT

BY
LILLIAN ELIZABETH ROY

AUTHOR OF
THE POLLY BREWSTER BOOKS
THE GIRL SCOUTS BOOKS
THE LITTLE WASHINGTONS
THE WOODCRAFT SERIES, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY
H. S. BARBOUR

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I TROUBLE IN CHINA	1
II THE ATTACK	14
III THE ESCAPE	29
IV A VISIT TO INDIA	43
V THE SHORT CUT	63
VI NEW FRIENDS IN CAIRO	84
VII WHAT THE WIZARD SAID	99
VIII THE SCARAB	124
IX MRS. ALEXANDER'S SHEIK	143
X THE SIROCCO'S BRIDAL	160
XI BEVAN'S BRAVERY	174
XII ROMANCE ON THE NILE	190
XIII FAREWELL TO EGYPT	203

POLLY IN EGYPT

CHAPTER I

TROUBLE IN CHINA

POLLY BREWSTER and her friends in the Dalken party of tourists were left on the yacht safely harbored at Hong Kong, in our last book called *Polly in the Orient*, you remember. But trying to keep a number of curious, eager girls quietly enjoying the scenes of a large and active city from the deck of a vessel proved to be too great a problem for Mr. and Mrs. Dalken. So it came about that the day following the arrival of the *Atlanta* at a given quay in the crowded harbor of this great commercial port of China, Captain Hall advised that they take a short trip up the beautiful scenic West River.

The Americans had “done” Hong Kong that day, by being shown the principal sights from the commodious automobiles that Mr. Dalken had hired, and now they hailed the Captain’s suggestion with delight. To sail up the Pearl, or the West River, and see the “floating population” of Canton—thousands of whom live their lives on sampans in the river, and know no other homes—was alluring. Also the promise of visiting old Macao, the Portuguese colony settled in 1557, offered many interesting experiences to the tourists.

At Canton, the Captain anchored, to allow the voyagers to go ashore to see the old city with its narrow streets and fascinating bazaars. To Mr. Dalken’s amusement the ladies immediately started “shopping.”

“As though the yacht has any space left for all the Oriental goods we will have to pay duty on when we get back to New York!” said he.

Mr. Toller, who sympathized with his host, added, “It will be cheaper for you all to fol-

low our example, and go back to Japan to live."

"That's well enough for you, with your investment in the tea plantations; but how about me, with my business interests in New York?" returned Mr. Dalken.

Mrs. Dalken laughed, "His business may be in New York, but I must confess that his interests seem to have been pretty well scattered over the globe since I first met him."

Then Polly retorted, "That's because you kept him hopping at your heels." This made them all laugh merrily at Mrs. Dalken's expense.

The river was so inviting, and time being no factor with Polly's party, it was decided to sail inland for a trip. Mr. Dalken had heard rumors of uprisings, but Mr. Toller "pooh-poohed" any such thing. In Canton the tourists noticed unusual indifference to them by the citizens, yet they had no thought of danger to themselves. Mr. Toller's assuring words removed any doubt.

"Even if some of these Chinks were to start things going, we Americans would not be in-

volved. It might happen that a few Jews or the British will be threatened, but that's all! The Chinese really are a very meek race."

"Do you know," added Mrs. Toller, "it is up at *The Forks*—a town located where this river forks into its two main tributaries—that a friend of ours is the physician. His wife is a mission teacher there. Suppose we stop and visit them, since we are so near. How delighted they will be!"

So it was that Polly and her friends sailed along the inviting waterway, with its shores lined with sampans and other craft, until they reached the upper forks. Here they decided to anchor over night, and visit the town the next day. But they knew not what was awaiting them.

That evening, on the deck of the *Atlanta*, Mrs. Toller related the interesting story of her friends.

"Janet was a school-girl friend of mine in Ohio, where I was born. She met Jack Averill in Columbus, Ohio, when she studied there in the Teacher's College. He was studying medi-

cine. They became engaged immediately following their graduation.

"Jack was keen on trying his science in China, for he had heard of the need of physicians in the Orient. And Janet, not wishing to remain behind, yet not willing to become an extra expense for a beginner in medical practice, secured a two year's contract as mission worker in China."

"So they were married and lived happily ever after," added Mr. Toller, nodding to the girls.

"Well, every letter I had from Janet thereafter was full of her work, and her contented life," was Mrs. Toller's admission:

"We visited them once, about six years ago, in this very town, and I was shocked at the appearance of dear Janet. She was working too hard with the natives, Jack explained. But Janet said it was the climate, and the diet. She said it was difficult to secure any variety in foods.

"Now I can imagine how thrilled they both will be to have us surprise them," was the happy remark that concluded Mrs. Toller's story.

In the morning the four Tollers, laden with viands that Mr. Dalken insisted upon choosing from the well stocked larder of the *Atlanta*, left the other members of their party to inspect the inland town, while they went on to the suburbs to visit their friends.

It was a long, hot walk over heavy dirt roads, but at last they reached the suburb where they had been directed by an official-like citizen. The spot was comparatively isolated, but beautiful, as Nature dresses all these lands.

The house appeared to be closed. All the outer blinds were closed, likewise the door. No one was seen or heard. The Tollers glanced at each other in surprise; then Carl decided,

"We'll try the front entrance. If no one replies, we'll have to hide our donations and leave a card to explain."

"Oh! I'd hate to leave without seeing them again, after coming all this way," said Mrs. Toller wistfully.

"Wait until we cross that bridge," was her

husband's advice. "Come, Ben, rap well on that sliding door."

Thus commanded, Benjamin Toller knocked loudly on the panel. Soon an old Chinese servant opened the small window and peered out.

Mr. Toller knew enough of Chinese to question and be answered. Then he turned to his wife to interpret what the old woman had told him.

"She says the master is ill in bed with fever—that they kept the house locked safely against the attacks of the rabble in the town, most of whom came from the interior towns to join the uprising."

"What kind of fever has he?" asked Mrs. Toller.

Mr. Toller put this question, but the old peasant woman could not say. Then she was sent to ask her mistress to come at once and greet her old friends.

In a few moments' time Mrs. Averill came running from an inner room, her face expressing

great amazement and eagerness. When she saw and recognised her old chum, she fairly threw herself upon her and began weeping hysterically.

"Oh, my dear! my precious friend! you are a direct answer to prayer. Never will I doubt again, after this! Jack and I have been praying earnestly for help and rescue, and here you are!"

When Mrs. Averill had calmed herself somewhat, Mrs. Toller got her to explain what was the trouble.

"Why, you see the natives have been seeing and hearing many strangers that visited the settlements and towns all along this and other rivers in China. These speakers are what we would term 'Reds,' because they have spread the seeds of revolution throughout the land. All visitors and white residents are denounced and, I fear, will be attacked unless help comes from home, or we can escape.

"We saw the unrest and effect of such visiting here in our quiet home-town—those who had been friendly and grateful turned against us and

scowled. The schoolhouse has been closed, and only a few of Jack's patients remain friendly towards us—after all we've done for this town, too! Sacrificed health, money and home to help them—and then to have this!"

Mrs. Averill sighed and shook her head deploringly, "Then we considered the advisability of leaving here and going to Hong Kong, where we would be sure of meeting other Americans, or English people.

"We prepared to depart, but before the regular boat was due Jack came down with a serious attack of fever. I think it is typhoid, but he laughs at such fears.

"Then the natives learned we were planning to leave, and they began showing signs of hostility—not only towards us individually, but against the faithful old servant who has been with us since we first came to China. We have been boycotted in the way of supplies, and only during the last day or two I have felt a difference in the attitude of the servant. She confessed that it was

dangerous for her to remain with us. She must leave.

"When she told me this not an hour ago I broke down and declared there could be no just Power, Who would permit us to be so tested for all our humanity and kindness to others.

"Now here you are, and I admit I am ashamed of my complaints."

After other short explanations, Janet said, "Now come and see Jack. These two young men had best remain here and watch the house while we go in to speak to my husband. The natives, seeing aid is at hand, might rebel and attack us."

The expression of fear on Mrs. Averill's face and her trembling were pitiful to see. But Mr. Toller quickly reassured her by explaining how they came—and that the yacht with enough brave Yanks on board to intimidate any Chinese that dared to show their animosity, was anchored in the harbor.

Mrs. Averill relaxed at this encouraging news and immediately led the way for Mr. and Mrs.

Toller to the adjoining room; Carl and Benjamin remaining in the main room to watch and wait.

The sick man looked so ill and weak that Mrs. Toller caught her lip between her teeth to keep from exclaiming outright. Mr. Toller had more self-possession and smiled bravely, even while he took the limp hand and held it. At the same time he managed to feel the pulse, and noted the signs of typhoid fever. Then Janet told how the welcome friends had arrived.

"Well now, old man, tell me how soon you can be ready to go with us to the *Atlanta*, to sail away from such inhospitable shores?"

Jack Averill smiled wanly. "We are ready now," whispered he. "But I cannot walk."

"No need to walk, with two strapping football heroes here to carry you. We'll make a bundle of all your valuables for me to carry. My wife and your wife will look after necessities, and there we are—on board the yacht before you know it."

Mr. Toller's cheerful way of presenting the

problem had its calculated effect on both Mr. and Mrs. Averill. Immediately then she started to prepare for a hasty departure. She brought a hammock and the long bamboo pole, which is used to carry heavy burdens, by means of resting each end upon the shoulder of a man. Carl and Benjamin were to carry the doctor thus. All effects, other than valuables and papers and a few personal necessities, were left behind for the old servant.

When they were ready to start Mr. Toller went first, the boys with the sick man followed, and the two ladies brought up the rear.

Outside the house a group of scowling natives stood and watched, but not one dared to offer any resistance to the exodus. Mr. Toller swung his cane lightly until he had it up between both hands. He then adroitly twisted the knob at its top and presto; he whipped out a rapier, which had been concealed inside the hollow stick. But he merely gave the Chinese a glimpse of it, before slipping it back again in its case. Then he,

with a bravado he was far from feeling, marched down the road.

When they had passed the mutinous circle of natives, Mr. Toller changed his position from front to rear, thus protecting his party from a rear assault.

They reached the yacht eventually without any native attack, and soon the sick man was tenderly cared for.

CHAPTER II

THE ATTACK

THE Tollers, with their two friends, were helped on board the *Atlanta* by Captain Hall, who had been standing at that side overlooking the town. Mr. Toller saw the anxious expression on the Captain's face and wondered.

The moment the Averills were comfortably placed in a state-room, Mr. Toller hurried out to question Captain Hall—to ask where all the others of the party were.

"That's what is worrying me," replied the Captain. "They all left the yacht directly after you went, and I haven't seen one of them since. I sent Allen and Jenks in search of them, to hurry them back; because I do not like the sullen and defiant looks of the loungers on this old dock."

The Captain had just finished speaking when sounds of strife on shore echoed to those on the *Atlanta*. Shrill yells mingled with cries, and then several shots were heard.

Mr. Toller turned pale, but Captain Hall's face became red with wrath.

"Just as I feared! These rascals have held up our friends. Thank heavens! Allen and Jenks have their revolvers; and I should think Mr. Dalken would carry his also."

Then he ran to the gong that would summon all hands on deck, and gave the signal. Instantly the entire crew gathered about the Captain, for all had heard the uproar on shore. The two Toller boys hurried from the Averills' room and joined the others.

Now there came sounds of gun shots, mingling with the wild howls and whooping of the natives. Nothing of strife could be seen from the *Atlanta*, but the gang that had been lounging on the rickety wharf started away at top speed.

"We've got to organize a relief party at

once!" commanded Captain Hall. "Mr. Toller in charge. Carl and Ben his assistants. Every man in the crew will arm and obey orders, in rescuing our friends. I shall have to remain at my post here, but I will keep the cook to help me."

"Ooo-h, Mislee Cap'n! Le'm'ee go fit bad Chinee. Me whallop big!" shouted Cooky, swinging his arms wide, as he spun around on his toes to show how he could clear away the foe. His long pigtail stood out on a horizontal level from his chin, and almost switched Mr. Toller across the face. Being in his native land Cooky was permitted to wear his hair as every faithful Chinaman loves to do. At other times, however, he wore it wound about his head, with a tightly fitting skull cap over it.

Captain Hall was dubious about the wisdom of letting Cooky join the rescuers. If his countrymen saw him with the white men, they might use particular care to catch or kill him. Then there would be no cook!

"Perhaps the presence of one of their countrymen, to converse with and explain to them, will help us all," suggested Carl Toller.

The Captain shook his head. Then turning to Cooky he said, "We have very sick man on boat. Chinamen make much trouble for him and wife. He need good soup and nice tea right way."

The appeal to Cooky's hobby was sufficient to make him forget all else, and he started away for the kitchen without another word. In fact, his mind now was centered upon the broth he would prepare.

The other members in the party were provided with revolvers, and some few with rifles, which were kept locked in a chest in the Captain's own room. Then having saluted the Chief, they started away.

The sounds of yelling and firing came nearer and nearer, and the relief party knew that the mates and Mr. Dalken were using their weapons to some effect. But what of the ladies in the

group? Had Captain Hall and his companions been given a glimpse of what really had happened they would not have felt so alarmed over the safety of their friends.

After the Tollers had passed through the town proper, on their way to the Averill home, Mr. Dalken and his group, having left the yacht, followed the dusty road that ran from the wharf; and, after passing through the copse of scrub-growth which effectually screened the town from sight of those on the quay, or the river, found themselves in a typical inland settlement whence all foreigners, other than the doctor and the teacher, had already fled for safety.

But the one business street of the town seemed deserted. Shops were closed and their owners gone. Children and dogs only could be seen playing in the road, or running in and out of their homes.

Down a side street, however, Mr. Dalken saw a crowd standing. Not only men, but women also. They were listening to the exhortations

of a man who stood upon an empty box.

"He must be electioneering!" was Polly's amused remark.

"Worse than that—he is one of the 'Reds' that are sowing the seeds of sedition throughout China," said Jenks, pulling his revolver belt taut, and assuring himself that the weapon was loaded. His friends saw the action and wondered.

"Don't start anything prematurely, Jenks," ventured the other mate.

"Is there any danger to us?" queried Mrs. Dalken. "If so, we'll go right back to the yacht."

"Why of course not!" declared Mrs. Alexander, with contempt at the other lady's supposed fear and dread.

"No harm done in times of peace to prepare for war," was Jenks' reply. At this Allen and Mr. Dalken made sure their revolvers were convenient.

"How silly of you men!" laughed Mrs. Alex-

ander. "It's enough to insult the natives."

Meantime Mrs. Dalken had consulted with the girls and wished them to return to the yacht, before trouble would be launched.

"What about the Tollers, and their American friends?" asked Polly. "We must not think of leaving them here at the mercy of enraged citizens. I propose we all go in the direction of the teacher's house and act as an escort for them to return to the yacht."

"I was about to suggest the same plan," added Jenks, looking to Mr. Dalken for his opinion.

"I think it will be wise for the two ladies and the girls to return at once to the *Atlanta*, while we go on to offer our protection to our other friends," said he.

"And leave us to run into that crowd of awful looking scum hanging around the quay for a signal to attack and loot?" exclaimed Eleanor. "No thank you!"

The men in the party realized that she spoke sense, so they did not urge the return. Mrs.

Alexander noted this and began to wonder.

"You don't really think there is any danger to us in this quiet place, do you?"

"Who can tell?" countered Mr. Dalken.

"I wish to goodness we had never left the *Atlanta!*" declared Mrs. Dalken. "If we were safely on deck, you men could go after the Tollers without our handicap. And we could remain with the Captain to defend the vessel."

"But that is not the case now," returned Polly. "We are *here*, and here is the place to be reckoned with."

"I say," suggested Dodo, as they all made their way slowly down the main street, "let's ask one of these youngsters where their teacher's house is located. Then we can hurry there and join the Tollers. With them and the doctor to help, we will have four more men in the crowd, and two more women to add to our formidable battalion. Then let us make tracks for the yacht and get away." Which was easy enough to say, but not so simple to do.

"Dodo's suggestion is good," approved Mrs. Dalken; and the others agreed with her.

"Next thing is to find the house," said Allen.

"Every youngster ought to know where the teacher's house is," replied Polly. "We'll ask."

Suiting the action to her words Polly stopped a boy of about six—the eldest in sight—and asked him the question. The native lad, not understanding English yet comprehending the word "teacher," thought the visitors desired to visit the school.

He grinned up at Polly and jabbered in Chinese, but his dirty index finger pointed out a low, square bamboo structure standing at the outskirts of the rambling town. It was the building where Mrs. Averill had labored so hard to teach the young "Chinook" mind "to shoot"—but not with firearms!

Believing that the "center of learning" was the home of the Averills, Polly led the way along the well-beaten path that ran to the school-house. The native children gathered around their com-

panion to question him about the foreigners. Then they all started to follow the visitors.

No signs of life were noticeable at the house when the Americans approached.

"I wonder if the Tollers arrived?" was Eleanor's question.

"I hope they did not go in the wrong direction. It might mean trouble if they were to be found wandering alone about these outskirts," added Mrs. Dalken.

By this time Polly reached the closed door of the building and rapped upon its lattice-work. Eleanor and Dodo peered in through a window, but saw nothing to reassure them. Meanwhile the horde of native children collected in a circle about Mr. Dalken's party.

Repeated raps upon the door failed to bring any response from within; then Jenks stepped up and tried the door. It opened. He entered first and stared. Polly at his heels, looked around at a bare room—not a stick of furniture, or other article to be seen. But a crude black-

board made upon heavy paper and stretched upon the wall proved the solution to their questions.

"It's the schoolroom!" exclaimed Dodo, having entered with Eleanor.

"Perhaps the teacher lives near," said Polly.

They went out again to question the same lad, who now stood at the front of his ragged following. All Polly's questioning, however, failed to elicit any evidence—other than pointing at the schoolhouse.

Then Jenks and Allen began seeking in the environs of the building for sight of a dwelling. And while they sought thus, the Tollers, with the Averills, were leaving the doctor's house at the other side of the town, and making their way to the yacht.

By the time the Dalken party were convinced that no doctor or teacher lived in any of the few miserable bamboo hovels scattered around the schoolhouse, the natives began to assemble and formed a circle around the strangers.

Murmurs of disapproval and protest came

from the sullen natives, while they stood watching the white visitors conferring. Nothing might have followed this espionage from the Chinese, if Polly and her companions had started quietly away to return quickly to the *Atlanta*. But, as usual, Mrs. Alexander was the indirect cause of the conflict that ensued.

She stood farthest from the angry mob of natives, but nearest the bare place where the pupils used to play and exercise. Just back of her was a depression in the ground, now partly filled with stagnant water. She failed to see it, but the urchins knew it was there. Were they not accustomed during school recess, to play in that mud hole?

Mr. Dalken advised his friends to follow him as indifferently through the native crowd as if nothing unusual had happened. They were not to resent any pushing, but keep close together and walk with pleasant expressions—and to *keep on going* straight until the yacht was reached.

He had not concluded his advices before the

rattle of a cart was heard, and a few moments later a two-wheeled vehicle drawn by a donkey came up. It stopped in the cleared place back of Mrs. Alexander. A peasant boy drove; but a man, easily recognised as a leader in politics, was the passenger. He leaped from the cart and pushed a way through the circle. He came directly to Mr. Dalken and spoke in broken English.

"Wha-foh you heah? Me no like Englis' robber. He come tak all away. He no good! You pay back now, or me lock you up in house." His face was evil and his eyes expressed the threat he had not spoken.

Mr. Dalken began to mediate, by explaining their presence, and how the boy had misdirected them when they planned to visit friends.

At this moment some of the mischief-loving boys threw sticks at the donkey. And the beast, obeying its training, started off. Its driver, leaning over the side of the cart, was thrown out, and fell right into the shallow pool of slime.

Naturally the dirty liquid rose in a deluge, and Mrs. Alexander, being directly in line with the shower, was completely spattered from lovely hat to white suede shoes. Only the front of her escaped the mud bath.

The crowd of gamins laughed uproariously—not at the lady, as she imagined, but at the donkey-driver, who rose from the pool with muddy ooze trickling from every point of his form.

The attention of the natives was diverted and their amusement would have been promising for the freedom of the Americans, had not Mrs. Alexander in her wrath at such ridicule quickly lifted her closed parasol and started to strike the unfortunate victim of the prank.

Thus a general fight followed. The natives flung stones and mud and sticks at the Americans, and they in turn retreated instantly inside the schoolhouse. The door was closed and barricaded as well as such a flimsy protection would permit. But the apertures used for windows

would not keep the assailants out. They yelled and danced. Then it was that Jenks fired his revolver up through the opening in the bamboo-thatched ceiling, as a signal to those on the yacht. And the Captain hearing that first shot thought it was fired in defence.

The sound of a gun had its partial effect on the natives. The women and children were instantly sent away and only the seditious politician and his following remained.

Mrs. Alexander lamented loudly because of the danger that menaced her. But Dodo, losing all patience, exclaimed, "This is all your fault, Ma. We would have been safely on the *Atlanta* by this time, if you hadn't spilled the beans!"

CHAPTER III

THE ESCAPE

THE wild mob of natives soon surrounded the bamboo house, but the threatening revolvers of the three Americans kept the more daring of the Chinese away from the door and windows. Hence they could not gain an entrance. While Mrs. Alexander was wringing her hands and crying futilely, and Dodo was blaming her for this unfortunate misadventure, Mrs. Dalken was seeking for means of defence for herself and the girls. Thus it was that she glanced from a back window and saw the cart just outside, and the donkey grazing peacefully upon a small patch of briar-grass. The natives were not concerned about the rear of the structure, because they knew there were no doors there for their captives to use for escape.

While investigating the schoolroom Polly came to a small cupboard built in one end of the room, beside a small fire-place which evidently had been used for cooking purposes as well as for heating or drying the premises. In this closet Polly found many vials labelled by the doctor. Her eyes recognised the label on one bottle, and she had a sudden inspiration.

She ran over to communicate her idea to Mr. Dalken, leaving the door of the cupboard open. Eleanor, on her way there to see what her friend had found to interest her so, spied two rusty rifles upon the floor. These she caught up with a whoop of delight and carried quickly to Jenks, who was nearest to her at the time.

He tried them and reported, "Perfectly all right, only a little the worse for wear. I suppose the doctor kept them here in case of need for his wife and self."

The rifles were loaded and one was given to Dodo and one to Eleanor. Polly was too busy with her plan to heed the discovery of the rifles.

Jenks stationed a girl at each window aperture, thrusting the nose of the guns out far enough for the natives to see.

Mr. Dalken had agreed eagerly with the suggestion made by Polly, and authorized her to go ahead and see if it would work out. Thus encouraged, Polly ran back to the cupboard, took a quart bottle, marked "whiskey: for medical use." It was three parts full. Then she took another vial marked laudanum and mixed its contents with the whiskey. A huge jug upon the floor of the closet labelled "distilled water" was the third ingredient in her concoction. When she had mixed them well together, she called out that she was ready.

"Come here, Jenks and Allen," summoned Mr. Dalken. The two mates hastily joined him, and then he whispered Polly's plan. Immediately Allen offered to be the one to invite the desperadoes to have a drink. But Mrs. Dalken, coming up in time to hear the plan, had a better way to suggest:

"The donkey cart stands directly under that small window, and this jug can be lowered into it easily. Once in we can frighten the animal away by a shot from the gun. The Chinese will be sure to catch the beast, and then find the stone jug labelled 'whiskey.' For we must remove the label from the bottle and attach it to the jug."

"But they can't read—how will they know it?" asked Polly.

"They'll understand it is something we wish to save, and they'll sniff at it. Every last one of them knows the smell of liquor, and that will be enough," returned Mr. Dalken.

"Even if its fails to work, there will be no harm done, for the doctor will not want to use this dispensary again, I judge," was Allen's answer.

So the mate and the girls worked as suggested, Polly tearing into strips her white linen skirt for an impromptu rope by which to lower the jug to the cart.

All went well so far. The jug was safely

stood in the cart, and the strip of linen that had been tied to its handle was thrown in after it. Then it was advised that the ladies drop some of their outer apparel into the cart to make it appear as though they planned to escape that way. Hats and linen coats, even Mrs. Alexander's parasol that had caused all the trouble, were flung down into the old vehicle.

Polly had not time enough to draw her head back through the small window before she caught a glimpse of the Red leader, his head projecting from behind the corner of the building, watching the strange actions of the prisoners in dropping their apparel into the empty cart.

Before the girl could communicate the news to her friends, the rascal threw a stone and hit the donkey. It started away from its quiet rest and galloped across the clearing once more. But waiting hands soon caught it, and prevented it running away. What happened then in that rabble, the inmates of the schoolroom could not tell.

There was much delighted clamoring, and the

leader of the gang seemed to take all credit for something to himself. Polly and her fellow prisoners were praying that the wretches were drinking liberally of her doctored whiskey. Then all that remained to be done would be to wait patiently until the laudanum worked. Nevertheless Mr. Dalken advised that the mates fire their revolvers ever and anon to let the Captain know they needed help, and also to keep the natives from suspecting a trick. If they sat quietly waiting, the jailers might suspect something wrong with the drink.

But they had no cause to worry over that point. The Chinese are addicts to dope and any product that will keep them semi-conscious, so now they hailed the advent of a jug of whiskey—as the leader interpreted the label on the jug—with great gusto. Thereafter the leader measured each man a drink, keeping several for himself.

But the leader found the drink too palatable for unappreciative peasants to taste; hence he

stopped giving a mouthful to others, and imbibed liberally himself. Those natives deprived of their measure resented this, and soon a general fight began. In the squabble the jug was turned over and its contents ran out.

Fortunately for the prisoners, however, the leader and two-thirds of the natives had taken enough doctored whiskey to begin to feel heavy. They could not fight back when their fellowmen struck. Soon, therefore, they fell and lay inert. The remaining natives, thinking they must have knocked their comrades senseless, became frightened at the result of the fight and hastened away to call the wives and families of the doped men.

The donkey and cart were forgotten entirely now, as they ran to the main section of the town. When quiet reigned, Mr. Dalken peered out through a window and saw the tail-end of the retreating rabble on its way home. He also saw the stupefied looks of those of the attacking party that were prone upon the earth; prominent in the foreground was the leader.

"Hurrah for Polly's plan! It worked!" was his relieved cry, as he waved his revolver over his head.

Then of course every one must peep out to gloat over the scene of Polly's victory in battle without a drop of blood being shed.

"Now we can hurry back to the yacht, can't we," said Mrs. Alexander.

"No, not yet," replied Mr. Dalken. "The men of the village are more in number than we, so we must wait for Captain Hall to send us help —as he is sure to do."

All this planning, and its result in the stupefying of the natives, took time. So it was with confidence that the two mates fired signals from the windows, which might be heard on board the *Atlanta*.

But the Americans were not to escape so easily. Before they realized what might result from their having dosed the numbers of men outside, cries and curses reached them, coming from the wives and mothers of the unconscious natives.

The men, returning to their homes in town, had not confessed to their fighting, but said the white demons inside the schoolhouse had used a new form of magic. Whenever a gun had popped one of the valiant soldiers outside fell. But no bullet hole or blood could be seen.

The women, braver in their sorrow at that which they thought was death for their men-folk, started for the school building, to remove their dead and then punish the criminals. They cared not if the strange weapons killed them also. So it was that Polly and her friends saw with consternation that the whole town was on its way to mete justice to the foreign magicians. They came armed with every kind of domestic utensil, as well as with tools used in their rice-fields and other farming.

They presented so formidable an army that it was not surprising to have Mrs. Alexander start crying again, and calling upon a deaf heaven to deliver her!

"I cannot bear to think of fighting women,"

declared Mr. Dalken, "but I must defend those in my charge."

"I do not think there is one among them all armed with a gun," added Jenks.

"We must frighten them off with our shooting up over their heads," said Allen.

"And you girls stand guard at the rear window, and at any crevice in the walls which will offer a peep-hole," advised Mr. Dalken, taking his place at the entrance door.

But the natives had a plan of attack quite new to the Americans, and which was impossible to prevent.

Part of the attacking army removed the bodies of the sodden men, and in so doing several of them grunted in their disturbed sleep. A few regained consciousness, but the rest remained heavily drugged. Nevertheless, it was found that not one of them was dead. This news gave the female battalion more courage to punish the foreigners as they deserved.

A group managed to approach the house on

THE ESCAPE

39

each side, where there were no windows. Here they began to dig with their farming implements, to loosen the heavy poles that formed the sustaining props for the rest of the bamboo structure.

When the besieged heard the sound of digging and shovelling, they could not imagine what it was all about. But the reason for it was revealed when one wall of the room started to sag downward, with the removal of a staunch prop on that side.

Now Dodo thought to hide her mother until the danger was passed.

"Ma, if you come and hide in this chimney-place, you'll run no risk of being struck, should those Chinks begin to throw things at us," said Dodo.

"In that dirty chimney! Why, I'll ruin my clothes and my hair. It's bad enough to have lost my hat and coat."

"Better get dirty than broken up!" retorted her daughter. "What will you do with clothing, plus fractured arms, legs and head, once those

heathen hurl their missiles at your tender bones."

"I'll hide in the medicine closet," declared Mrs. Alexander.

But that was on the side where the excavating was going on so successfully for the foe, and Dodo dared not let her mother hide there. Eventually she got her to agree to crawl into the fireplace and sit upon her heels until danger was over. It was some work to make Mrs. Alexander remove her high-heeled shoes and creep upon hands and knees to get into the fireplace.

Immediately after she had managed to squat in comparative safety in such limited quarters, she saw with apprehension the wall on that side where the closet was, crumple outwards—the bamboo poles piling up like a heap of Jack Straws. She screamed, but the sound went up the chimney; also her comrades were too engaged in defence to heed her cries.

Then when it seemed as though help was impossible, and the second wall appeared to be coming down, which in its fall would cause the

remaining two to totter and cave in, the Americans heard shouts of good old Yankee voices and the sound of many rifles.

The screams and cries of foes outside the schoolhouse told the prisoners that rescue had come for them. Immediately then the natives fled, for they were cowards in the face of armed men. So anxious were they to escape unhurt that the drunken men were forgotten and left lying where they had been dragged.

It was now only a matter of time before Mr. Toller and his army reached the schoolhouse to free their friends. Then ensued many congratulations from both sides, while it was ascertained that no one had been injured.

In the midst of the rejoicing an unrecognizable figure appeared. It was that of a woman, but not a native. Suddenly Dodo gave a hysterical scream and cried, "Ma! Ma!"

Then the others realized that Mrs. Alexander was the individual under the masque of soot. The severe quaking of the walls had shaken the

frail chimney structure so that its thick coating of soot sifted gently down upon the occupant of the hearth. She had been too engrossed in watching her friends to take note of her disguise.

There was no water at hand in which to wash her, so the entire army from the *Atlanta* escorted Mrs. Alexander through the town and on to the quay. On this retreat the men kept firing their rifles, to intimidate the natives in case they proposed to obstruct the way to the yacht.

But no interference was shown until all were safely on board the vessel, and the command was given to cast off. Then and not until then a stray shot from an old blunderbuss tore some splinters from the flag-pole. But the Stars and Stripes waved as freely as ever from its top, for no one dared shoot at that famous emblem!



MRS. ALEXANDER, COVERED WITH SOOT, IS ESCORTED TO
THE YACHT.

CHAPTER IV

A VISIT TO INDIA

POLLY and her friends had planned to remain in Hong Kong for a week or more, and then sail leisurely to the Philippines and visit there. From that point they would voyage to India, and thence on to Egypt. But plans often are made only to be changed again.

Before the Dalken party had had time to do more than get their mail, which had accumulated at Hong Kong for them, word came to the Captain of the *Atlanta* that the ports of China would be closed to foreign vessels after the expiration of forty-eight hours from that midnight hour.

"What is it all about?" asked Mr. Dalken impatiently.

"Maybe it is only a false report," ventured Mrs. Dalken.

"I do not think so," replied the Captain. "Even were it to turn out to be a tempest in a teapot, the country will not be any too safe. And we are far from home."

"But what about the Philippine Islands?" asked Polly. "We can spend the time there with pleasure, and no concern about this coming war. China has nothing to do with the Philippines."

"There's where you are mistaken, Miss Polly," returned the Captain. "There is and always has been a secret bond of sympathy between the Islands and the Orient. When the United States assumed the responsibility of government over the Philippines, it caused certain jealousies with other foreign countries, and there started a quiet, secret course of undermining work that might result in the Islands combining forces with China. Anyway, I would not advise our touching at Manila, or any other port there now."

"Good gracious!" cried Eleanor, peevishly, "here we are, at the other side of the world, right at the doorstep of Manila and other won-

derful places we wish to visit, and we have to pass by as though they never existed."

"But you can understand, Nolla, dear," argued Mrs. Dalken, "that this is an unexpected crisis which seems to be pending. If we stubbornly remain in China, or go on to the Islands, after knowing the danger, we would be lacking in wisdom and common sense."

"Besides, girls, just because we have to change our course, and sail on to India and Egypt without visiting the Philippines, does not say we shall never visit them. Your lives are all before you, and we will have many years still in which to visit wherever we choose," added Mr. Dalken. Which shows Mr. Dalken was a diplomat.

"Oh, well, there's no use in arguing with the Captain and you," grumbled Eleanor. "If you've made up your minds to whisk us off to Asia and Africa, we'll have to accept the ultimatum."

"But it does seem a shame that this old uprising had to come just as we landed at Hong

Kong," said Polly sadly. "Nevertheless, it is as you all say—we would be tempting Providence if we took chances by stopping here, or going on to China's ally."

"What is there to see in India?" demanded Eleanor, still too disappointed over the change of plans to accept the necessity with a smiling face. "Just a lot of fakirs and dancing dervishes. I've seen pictures of them in my old geography at school."

Her friends laughed heartily.

"One would think you were just out of the lowest grammar grade, Nolla!" exclaimed Polly. "You know very well that India is one of the most interesting lands in the world. And not only interesting, but instructive as well."

"Pooh!" scorned Eleanor, "Who wants education when we are off on a pleasure jaunt. I'm sure I know enough to last me until next year. Give me thrills and lots of peppy food for my eyes to devour." When she spoke in this fashion, her friends knew she was over her sulks,

and they all felt relieved to have her back in her usual cheerful state of mind.

"Well, anyway, fellow sufferers," declared the Captain, getting up from his chair and preparing to leave the lounge where the group had met to hear his dire news, "we will have to pull up stakes here and move on. The Chinese Traffic Cop waves his hand, and the sign reads 'Go.' If we remain here after this, we will take all the chances of being smashed up by the jam that is sure to come."

"Yes, Captain," agreed Mr. Dalken seriously. "We will have to leave without any procrastination; I am not willing to run any foolish risks. The sooner you can arrange to get under way, the better. We will consider our next landing place, once we are safe out of Chinese waters."

Thus it came to pass that Polly and her friends had to alter all their previous plans, and instead of "doing" the southern section of China and then the Philippine Islands, as they had hoped, they had to bid the Tollers and Averills a

hasty good-bye and set sail; so that they were soon out of sight of the tumultuous city of Hong Kong. The Tollers took the Averills back to their tea plantations in Japan.

Once the *Atlanta* was safely under way letters were distributed, and no more was heard from the girls; each one having been pacified with letters from South America. Polly had a long one from Tom. He wrote:

"Dearest Polly:

"It is a long time since I had a word from you. To me the distance—me in South America and you in the Orient—for letters to travel is appalling! I never know whether I am going to hear from you within a Blue Moon; nor do I know whether you are receiving my letters at all. I have written regularly every week as I promised you, but you have only mentioned two of them. I have had only three short letters from you. If you have written more often than that they have not reached me. But I cannot complain, when I am so far in the wilderness, and no way for the mail to reach me. Perhaps I will find a bag of letters in Puerto Barrio when I return there at the end of our prospecting here.

"I will not take up more time or paper in repeating vain regrets over the mail system in South America, but go right to the core of the matter I have to mention to you. I do hope you can manage to get a reply through to me on this momentous problem.

"In case you have not had my last letter, in which I wrote about the girl Carola, I will have to repeat it now.

"You remember my telling you of the astonishingly pretty white girl we discovered on the wharf at Cartegena, the day we landed from the steamer? The same girl that nursed Jack through his almost fatal fever, during the long tiresome voyage on the Magdalena River to our destination, Puerto Barrio, in Colombia.

"Well, it turned out that this Carola lived in Pto. Barrio, with a family of natives, named Guterriez. The Señor and his wife are splendid, but I do not care much for the daughter, Maria. She strikes me as being a selfish person, vain and silly to boot. But Carola: well, there's a wonder, if ever the world produced one. Do not mistake my admiration for anything more, darling Polly, because you ought to know by this time that there is only one girl for me!

"Jack Baxter evidently thinks as I do, and more so, if his looks and actions are any judge of the state of his heart and mind. I believe

Jack is really and truly in love at last. No trifling affair, like so many of his past flirtations. And to prove he is in earnest, he has not breathed a word of his love to Carola, or to others besides myself. He says he knows I will appreciate his heart's desire, because I too, have just such a desire for the dearest girl in the world.

"So much for Jack! He is able to take care of his own affairs now, and I do not see that he is going to have any competition for Carola's heart. Pete Maynard, Paul Stewart and Fuzzy, also the Captain—little Mr. Alex.—all admire and wait upon the girl, but we realize that Jack has first choice, because he discovered her, as it were.

"Now we come to the astonishing news I have to tell you. We had all started for the mountains of the interior, and left Jack convalescing in the hotel at Pto. Barrio, to come on and follow us as soon as he was strong enough to stand the trip and the hardships, without any suspicion that Carola might be other than she seemed—a very fair daughter of the Señor and Señora Gutierrez. Of course we could see that she had an unusually fine skin, and was not as dark-complexioned as Maria, and the other young people of the town. But that might have been a freak of nature, as so often happens.

"We discovered to our amazement, however,

after Jack and Señor Guterriez joined us in the mining districts, that the girl was a foundling. Her parents were of English origin, and both died at the old staked mining claims which the Señor told us of some time before. (It is these claims that we are seeking now; and having located them, we shall all have won the reward for coming here.) The Señor found the infant in the abandoned mining camp, several hours after the mother had died. Then he and his servants started back home with her. This happened long before he moved to Pto. Barrio to live, but his men dropped along the trail, from one cause and another, and only the Señor—then a younger man—survived with the child. His wife gladly accepted the charge of caring for and rearing the baby and the girl certainly repays them for their care with her love.

"Fuzzy says he went into the whole matter thoroughly before coming to join us in the mountains; because, he says, if Carola can prove her identity—that she is the child of a certain Englishman who was one of the group to incorporate the mining company that is the recorded owner of one of the richest gold mines in Colombia—she will be fabulously wealthy some day. But, of course, it takes a lot of work and cash to mine the gold in these awful mountains, and then it has to be transported to the river or to the rail-

roads. We do not worry about such little problems, however, since Dalky and his associates can quickly solve railroad and boat matters.

"Well, the Señor and Fuzzy took the mail-plane to Cartegena on purpose to search the record there for identification of the girl. They were not very successful, but at least they got in touch with a certain man there who remembered and related a long story to them of the man and wife with the little child, who stopped with him in Cartegena, during the time they were in that city.

"Fuzzy wrote to England, and to his lawyers in the United States, to follow up the meager clue he had been given. Meantime we know Carola is English, and that removed the last straw from Jack's intentions. Even had she been the child of these dark-skinned natives I do not think it would have changed his mind about proposing to her some day, when she should be a few years older. You see Carola is only sixteen, as far as the Señor can figure from the time he first found her.

"If it turns out that she has relatives living in England, we may take her back to New York, when we start for home. From that point she will be sent on to join her family in England. Fuzzy is writing to Mrs. Courtney (Mrs. Dalken, I mean; I cannot get accustomed to that change of name; I suppose it is because I have not seen

them for so long a time, and it seems strange to think of Old Dalky being married to your saint and soul-companion!). He is telling her more than I have to say about Carola. This I know, however, if the girl accompanies us North, she is to remain under Mrs. Dalken's wings until her people in England send for her.

"Then you and the other girls will have a chance to see her and judge whether I have overestimated her charms. When you get acquainted with her, Polly, you cannot resist loving her. It is the same with everyone she meets. At first they think how pretty and sweet she is. Then they begin to like her for her intelligence and soul. And at last they capitulate to her wholesale!

"And such a voice as she has! My—she could amass a fortune with her singing alone, even if she was a foundling without family or friends. And she never had a lesson in her short life; nor does she understand the technique of music. She studied composition only with an old priest in Puerto Barrio; and he tried to train her voice as best he could in his own simple method, in the old church choir loft.

"Dear Polly! I have been thinking very seriously about many things, and this is one of them: In case Carola does not locate any friends or family for herself, and she wishes to enter a school

for training her marvelous voice for public singing, wouldn't it be wonderful to give her a home with us for a time. I mean, if you will marry me as soon as you return from your trip to the Orient, and I am back from South America. We might get married without any further postponements, and then Carola can have her home with us. I am so sure of your immediately falling in love with her yourself, for you see I understand you so well that I know the girl will make an appeal to you at once.

"If you will only say the word, darling, I will cable mother in New York to have matters arranged for us by the time we arrive. Don't you think you would be happy in a lovely home of your own? And just think of the good you would be doing for Carola! The poor lost little waif—who never saw her mother and father: I mean she does not remember them. You would be doing a world of good by such a charitable act, to say nothing of making me the happiest lover in the world. Then I could settle down in harness, and not roam over the wilderness of the earth trying to calm my turbulent heart, when it jumps about because it has no anchorage in your love and life.

"I am writing this in hopes you will think over the situation seriously and be ready to invite Carola to your own home when we all meet once

more in New York. Good little old New York City! How far it seems to be from me now; and how I shall love to return to its noisy, bustling arms, if you are there to receive me as I wish and pray for!

"Now I am going to ask you to write me soon, and tell me all you have enjoyed since sailing from San Francisco for the Orient. But do not agree to let Dalky prolong the voyage to take you all to Egypt. Let us—you and I—save the wonderful River Nile for our honeymoon trip. I hear it is the most marvelous river in the world, even as Egypt is the most alluring land in the East. Wouldn't it be enjoyable, just we two, to browse along as we pleased on an old dahabeah, sailing the Nile on a moonlight night? Stopping here and there to visit the ancient temples, and to hunt trophies of antiquity that are always being unearthed in that historic country.

"Well think it over, sweetheart, and when we meet again in New York, you might decide to visit the Nile with me.

"Ever your devoted and faithful love,
TOM."

When Polly and her friends met again they found that the letters received from the young engineers in the jungle of Colombia presented,

when read aloud, a very good idea of the girl Carola, in whom they all felt so interested.

"I hope she is grown up enough to enjoy our company," said Polly.

"She must be, dear, or she wouldn't show such common sense and ability in taking care of Jack Baxter, as these letters attest," replied Mrs. Dalken.

* * * *

Captain Hall steered a course from Hong Kong direct to Saigon, a French Indo-China city. The girls had decided not to go ashore during the time the steward stocked the larder, and Mr. Dalken sent cables to different places in America. But once they caught a glimpse of the up-to-date city their decisions were reversed. Consequently every member in the party left the yacht and "did" the town.

In passing the beautiful theatre, than which there is no handsomer edifice in any occidental land, the ladies were amazed to read the bulletins for that week. And down on the main

street they were delighted to see Mary Pickford featured for the cinema of "Suds." The news reel, and comedies would have deluded one into believing this was Times Square, New York, were it not for the strange costumes of the natives and the immaculate cleanliness of the street. Also the entire lack of distracting noises, the clanging of fire-engines, ringing of gongs on trolleys and ambulances, blowing of sirens on autos, broad-casting radios from shop-doors, and the confusion of thousands of pedestrians talking at a high pitch in order to be heard by friends, was a proof that this was not Broadway and 42nd Street.

Back on the *Atlanta* once more it was decided to go straight to Singapore, and leave Bangkok, which was many miles distant at the end of the gulf, for the time when Mr. Dalken should fulfil his promises to take the girls to the Philippines.

So eager were Polly and her girl friends to reach Egypt, with its lure, that Mr. Dalken's announcement was received with pleasure.

"There is so much to see, in so many wonderful cities in India, that we could easily spend a year there, and then not be satisfied with our short visit," said Mr. Dalken.

"I was sure we would visit Bagdad, that mysterious city of Arabian Nights," ventured Polly.

"If we take in Bagdad, which is still farther off the beaten track of our course to Egypt, it will mean many weeks delay in introducing you to the Sphinx," remarked Captain Hall. Thus he hoped to focus attention upon Egypt.

"Oh, no! Polly doesn't care much about Bagdad," exclaimed Eleanor anxiously.

"Not enough to defer our arrival in Egypt to so long a time hence," agreed Polly.

"Besides, it is understood that our next trip to the Orient will include all those marvelous places we were not able to visit this time," added Mr. Dalken.

His generous offer was received by the girls with their customary method of thanks. He was instantly beset by three pairs of arms and given

such healthy hugs from athletes that he gasped for help.

Jenks and Allen, who with the Captain had attended the impromptu conference, came quickly to his rescue.

"Captain, this might be a good time and place to show us the map you made and tell us your plans and proposed course for reaching Egypt," suggested Mrs. Dalken.

"Yes, that's a practical idea," agreed Mr. Dalken.

So they crowded around the Captain and followed his outline of the voyage from Saigon to Singapore, thence past the Island of Sumatra to Penang, where they would stop before crossing the Bay of Bengal to Ceylon. From Ceylon, Captain Hall proposed to sail right across the Arabian Sea to the Red Sea, making Aden the first stop after leaving Colombo, Ceylon. Then up through the Red Sea (which the Israelites crossed by foot on dry land) to Suez. Thence through the famous Suez Canal to Alexandria,

where the yacht would anchor during the visit in Egypt.

When he had concluded his plans Polly said regretfully, "And we won't see Calcutta or Bombay, if we make all these short cuts."

"They're not so very short at that," laughed Jenks. "From where we are now, a few miles out from Singapore, to Calcutta will take a week or ten days, providing the elements are kind to us. Leaving Calcutta, and steering for Ceylon, another week. Now figure the time from Colombo, Ceylon, to Bombay as another week—not counting the days you require for visits to places of interest on the tours—and you will readily find we have used the best part of two months."

"And still feel as though we missed too much to be satisfied," added Mr. Dalken.

"Oh, well then," sighed Polly, turning her eyes from the alluring pictures shown in the illustrated book Mr. Dalken had secured in San Francisco, "I suppose we must pass up the visits to this exquisite bit of architecture, the Jain Temple in

Calcutta. Of course, I know that once we were there I would long to travel the 800 miles north on purpose to see the Taj Mahal, which is said to be the most beautiful building in the world.

"It is natural that Nolla and I, having studied interior decorating and architecture, should feel interested in a famous memorial that had master minds, from many lands in the East, not only contribute their ideas, but do the actual work on the spot.

"Then when you remember that every section of Central Asia is represented in this monument, by having marbles, jewels, stone and decorations contributed and used by the twenty thousand men, who needed seventeen years to complete the building, it is small wonder that we yearn to behold it."

"Almost, Polly, you have persuaded me to call off Captain Hall's plan, and visit this wonder so far from Calcutta that we shall have to forget Egypt and the Nile," said Mr. Dalken.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Polly, "I'd rather see the

Sphinx and the ancient temples built by the famous engineers descended from the wise Atlanteans, than all the memorials north of Calcutta."

"But you shall see them too, dear," said Mrs. Dalken. "It is only a matter of deferring such a visit until next year."

"Who knows what next year may bring forth for us!" murmured Polly. And the unexpected events which followed the home-coming of the tourists in New York proved that her intuition was justified that time.

Thus while Polly sat and studied all the wonderful places she *might* have seen this trip, her friends were engaged in planning a short cut to Alexandria.

CHAPTER V

THE SHORT CUT

"DON'T sit there looking as if you'd lost your last friend on earth!" exclaimed Eleanor, turning from the Captain's map to look for Polly.

"I'm too engrossed in admiring these colored scenes in India to bother about my looks," retorted Polly, without looking up from the book. But she knew how to gain Eleanor's interest.

She turned a page as she spoke; and Eleanor caught sight of a lace-like building on the page. She ran across the deck to her friend's chair and said, "What was that place on the page you turned?"

Polly turned back one page and Eleanor became deeply interested in studying the fine details of the lovely building. Then she glanced at the text underneath the illustration.

"Why! is this the memorial that Shah Jahan erected to his wife?" exclaimed she.

"Yes, now read the short description, Nolla, and you will understand why we ought to visit such places. That is, if you are still interested in our future career as architects and interior decorators."

Eleanor flushed at the insinuations that she might prefer a life as the wife of Paul Stewart to one as artist in partnership with her chum, Polly.

Polly did not pursue the subject, but read aloud instead: "Bagdad and Multan, Kananj and Shiraz, Samarkand and other parts of Asiatic Turkey, India, and even China and lands on the eastern Mediterranean contributed treasures for this marvel. Persia sent its onyx and amethysts; Arabia, coral and cornelians; Tibet its turquoises; Ceylon, the lapis lazuli and sapphires; Bundel-Kund, the diamonds from its mines; China, the crystal and jades; Punjab the jasper; Jaipur, the marble; and so on, until all people and places of the Far East were united in giving to the Taj

Mahal. Now, therefore, it stands as the consummation of the art of a great epoch."

Eleanor glanced at the opposite page of the book and became absorbed in looking at the famous "Tomb of Akbar the Great." Polly sat waiting patiently, smiling at her friend's interest.

"How perfectly beautiful this is," murmured Eleanor finally. "Let me read what the text says 'A mausoleum so impressive that it is said to have no parallel among Saracenic Monuments. It is a tomb which attracts well-known architects —both interior and exterior—as well as archeologists from the world over.' "

"Well I should think it would," declared Eleanor. "Now let's have some others."

So the two girls forgot Captain Hall and the group planning the short cut to Egypt that would carry the two lovers of the beautiful in art and the classic in decorating away from the scenes pictured.

They pored over the pictures and illustrations of temples and tombs of interior India, and of

those along the sacred Ganges River. They studied the marvelous work shown in the Aurungzebs Mosque in Benares; and the Kutab Minar Tower, in Delhi, and the Palace of the Winds, in Jaipur, with its lovely minarets and perfect outlines of beauty of form, were given much time.

"I suppose we will stop at Penang, eh, Polly?" asked Eleanor, seeing that it was on the route from Singapore through the Strait by which the *Atlanta* would reach the Bay of Bengal.

"We must ask for a stop-over, Nolla," replied Polly. "We ought to visit the Chinese Temple that is shown here, and these wonderful Botanical Gardens. Just think of it—there we shall be able to see all the exotic flowers and rare plants of the Orient!"

"We'll strike for a stop!" exclaimed Eleanor. "But time enough for that. Let's finish these entrancing pictures first."

"Huh! You might grow a face like mine—'as though you'd lost every friend in the world,' " teased Polly.

"I should worry, so long as such gorgeous scenes remained for me to look at," laughed Eleanor.

Consequently the chums looked at page after page of beautifully colored photographs of every notable or desirable point of interest in India, until finally they were compelled to close the book because night had crept upon them unawares. It was too dark to read a word.

Polly stood up and sighed, but Eleanor remarked optimistically, "Anyway, we have Penang and Colombo to look forward to."

"That reminds me, Nolla; let us go to Dalky and put up a brave fight for a stop at Penang. Otherwise Captain Hall might sneak past in the dark."

Mr. Dalken laughed when he heard the request and the threat of mutiny, were the yacht to slip away across the Bay of Bengal without stopping at the desired port.

"No fear, girls," returned Mr. Dalken, "we plan to load up the *Atlanta* at Penang with

enough stores to last us until we dock in Alexandria."

"Dalky, it is a shame we cannot visit Calcutta this trip," complained Eleanor.

"Is there anything worth seeing there, other than the dreadful 'Black Hole of Calcutta'?" quizzed Mr. Dalken.

"Why, Dalky! don't you know it is a wonder city?" asked Eleanor, shocked. Her expression caused Polly to laugh, for she knew Mr. Dalken was joking.

"The public buildings are gems of architecture, and the museum is said to be one of the finest in the world," added Eleanor.

"Humph! I see I shall have to take that album and put it under lock and key, or we will have Polly and you going overboard, to swim the Bay of Bengal, in order to reach the land of your desire," was Mr. Dalken's remark, when he spied under Polly's arm the cause of such ardor.

But he did not carry out his suggestion. Therefore the two girls found Dodo and thereafter

they frequently perused the pages of the book together.

The tourists spent two days in Penang, seeing all the principal points of interest. But Captain Hall was disappointed in not securing all the stock of goods necessary to last through to Alexandria. This would necessitate a longer visit at Ceylon, for which the girls were thankful; because they knew there was much to see on that island.

Next came the voyage to Colombo, the important city of Ceylon, which really is a half way stop between Singapore, known as the "Cross-road port of the Orient," and the Red Sea.

The *Atlanta* arrived at Colombo about dawn, and Captain Hall summoned all on deck to watch the unparalleled scene. As the mist which enveloped Adam's Peak was dispersed by the rays of the rising sun, Polly scarcely breathed. She felt as though a breath might shatter the bubble-like scene of this exquisite island decorating the Indian Ocean.

But Eleanor and Dodo were more prosaic.

They exclaimed in admiration, and drew attention to many places.

After breakfast Mrs. Dalken told her friends that they were to remain in Colombo until everyone felt satisfied that there was nothing more to see.

Thus it happened that the girls enjoyed the more modern section of the city, where they lodged in a splendid hotel, in addition to visiting the old native section. And there was not much that escaped the keen eyes of these girls.

They took the trip "up-country" to Kandy, where the famous Dalada Maligawa is located. This "Temple of the Tooth" is known and held in reverence by the population of India and lands where the faith is kept.

"When one thinks of the astounding number of devotees—about a third of the entire population of the world—that love and revere this temple, it is not surprising to find here such magnificent gems and precious stones," remarked Mr. Dalken, in reply to Mrs. Alexander's question as

to the reason for such a collection of jewels as the "tooth" displayed.

The tourists saw the sacred elephants, and others as well. They visited scenes of tropical beauty in Ceylon, and in the city they took Kodak pictures of Indian soldiers in their turbans and native capes. In the country they secured snapshots of peasants in their queer costumes.

One of the loveliest spots in the island was the Garden of Peradeuiya, famous now to all tourists in the Orient.

"If one could believe in the story of Adam and Eve, I should say they lived in this garden," commented Mr. Dalken. "It is nearer an ideal of the Garden of Eden than any place I have ever seen."

"I believe we could spend two weeks, or longer, on this beautiful island," said Mrs. Dalken, "and saturate our memory-cells with such perfect scenes of nature. What a joy to take them from their pigeon-holes, when we are back in New York, and fancy you can inhale the delicious

perfume, and hear the tropical birds singing!"

"And find a cobra hissing at our feet," added Mr. Dalken as a guide just then, in an every-day manner, jabbed a serpent with his pointed staff.

"Oh, dear me!" cried Mrs. Alexander, "do let us get back to the hotel, where there are no reptiles."

Her companions laughed encouragingly, and the guide made a joke of the sport the Cingalese had in hunting snakes.

Finally, one day, the *Atlanta* blew a siren that notified the people of Colombo that the spend-thrift Americans were leaving for the port on the shore of the Red Sea. But they had reaped a rich harvest in curios, fruits, and memories of Ceylon.

Crossing the northern part of the Indian Ocean the *Atlanta* had been prepared to face sudden typhoons, or stiff gales, but never had the Captain expected such calm and heavenly weather. He steered a course for Aden, the town on the entrance to the Red Sea. The yacht did not re-

main here very long, because now the tourists were eager to go on and reach the land of their dreams.

The *Atlanta* cruised along where Pharaoh's hosts were overwhelmed when the waters of the Red Sea closed upon them; then she came to the hundred-mile trip through the Suez Canal, and finally arrived in Port Said, the terminus.

In this busy city the girls saw all nationalities, as well as many types of Orientals. Natives from Palestine and Syria, Jaffa and Beirut; Moslems and Hindoos; Japs and Chinese; Americans and Europeans, all mixed like the ingredients of a huge mince-pie, made a picturesque scene.

Now that they were so near to their jumping-off place, Alexandria, the girls were anxious to continue the cruise; consequently Captain Hall was urged to leave Port Said with no regrets.

At last the yacht approached the gate-way to that ancient and fascinating land, Egypt. The girls could hardly control their eagerness and curiosity as they saw the city of Alexandria be-

coming clearer and more detailed as the *Atlanta* glided nearer and nearer the famous port.

"What do you expect to get out of Egypt?" asked Jenks of the group of young ladies peering through field-glasses at the entrancing scene on the dock: crowds of dragomans waiting, like hungry buzzards perched upon a tree, to swoop down upon their helpless victims the moment the anchor chains rattled its signal for them.

"Why," retorted Eleanor laughingly, "I plan to get out of this mysterious land with a nice young sheik."

Mate Allen chuckled. "There are plenty of them, I'm told, to be had for the picking."

"Oh, but that would not be romantic enough for Nolla," declared Polly. "She has no idea of plucking one, but rather that one should kidnap her and race off with her upon his Arabian steed to a far off oasis where you and the other men in our party will have to fight to recover her."

Eleanor laughed and nodded her animated

head, while she agreed, "See how well Polly reads my mind!"

"As if you had a mind to read!" was the teasing retort from her chum.

"What do you hope to get out of Egypt, Miss Polly?" repeated the Mate, turning to her.

"I'll wait to hear what report the others make first," was the reply.

"I'm hoping to take the mummy of an ancient Pharaoh home to Dad," said Dodo.

A peal of laughter greeted this statement, and Dodo stared at her friends before she demanded: "What's so funny in that? Don't you know how wonderful these mummies are? and how very rare?"

"We were not laughing at that, Do," Polly managed to say. "But at your idea of presenting the dried old mummy to such an active, energetic man as your father. I can picture the expression of disbelief on his face, were you to unwind such a gift from its ancient swaddlings in front of him."

"Well, don't worry—there's small chance of surprising Dad that way," retorted Dodo.

"I'm going to take yards and yards of Kodak pictures," declared Mrs. Dalken.

"Now it's your turn, Poll," chorused her friends.

"I expect to take away all I take in—myself!" was the cryptic remark.

"As usual, Polly takes the prize!" laughed Nolla.

"But that self will not be the same, Miss Polly, when you wave good-bye to these shores," added Jenks. "You'll experience such sensations, when beholding the age-old sculpturings and paintings on the temples and statues in this dream-land, that you will leave it in a state of trance—believing you have been living thousands of years ago, instead of in our modern times."

"Well, I have never lost my head before, and now it remains to be seen," was Polly's assuring answer.

At this time Mrs. Alexander appeared on deck and called Dodo in a voice that sounded like the last low wail of a sinking land-lubber in mid-ocean.

"Yes, Ma! What is it?" Dodo called, turning from the alluring scene on the wharf.

"I want to know if Mr. Dalken is correct in his historical statement," said Dodo's mother plaintively. "He just told me that all the different branches of the Alexander family descended from this famous Alexander the Great, for whom this dirty, horrid city is named."

Such an unexpected question, and the joke Mr. Dalken had meant, caused the group of young folks to laugh merrily. Dodo laughed loudest of all.

"You need not poke fun at me," was Mrs. Alexander's reply. "Laugh at Mr. Dalken, if you wish, because he is the misinformed tourist in our party!" So saying, in a surprising tone of power and strength for one supposed to be on the verge of collapse after the rough passage

through the Red Sea, the irate lady disappeared again.

By this time the *Atlanta* had pulled in close to the quay and was being "tied up" in her allotted berth. The group of young friends turned away from the rail to go in search of the Dalkens, to learn what was to be the next move. They had not far to go, however, because Mr. Dalken had come in search of them.

"Girls, I have a proposition to make. It was suggested by the Captain, and we talked it over, pro and con, before putting it up to you for a final decision. This is it:

"What say you if we remain on the yacht for to-night instead of engaging rooms in a hotel, where we will not feel half so comfortable. We can see much of Alexandria to-day, and leave those sights not visited until our return from up the Nile.

"The Captain learned from a native, who came on board just before we pulled up to the quay—and who, by the way, I mistook for a most high

official of the city, presenting as he did such a distinguished appearance, dressed in a long smock of white, with a blue and gold cloth draped over one shoulder; on his head the usual fez, that was mostly hidden by a brocaded gold sash wound around his head turban style—but you will see and judge for yourselves, if this visitor does not look like a Sultan——”

“Who is he?” was the chorus that interrupted Mr. Dalken’s description.

“That’s what we all wanted to hear, but the impressive stranger kept us guessing until he had presented his story, then we learned he is—but wait! You must hear the plan as he told it to us.” Mr. Dalken chuckled as he noted the curious faces, and the expectation to learn that a real Sultan or the Shah of Persia had deigned to visit them.

“Well, our morning caller said that we should not voyage up the Nile in this yacht. That the only enjoyable manner in which to take this most wonderful trip was in the dahabiyeh. Only the

dahabiyeh could transport us over the shallows; or nose in close to the banks of gorgeous-hued flowers, should we care to go ashore to visit an out-of-the-way temple or ruin. Only the dahabiyeh could give us the true feelings of romance and antiquity that prove to be the greatest charm in this land of the Nile.

"After presenting such an alluring picture to us as he did by describing all the enjoyment of sailing on a fine modern-equipped dahabiyeh, the Captain asked this unknown Shah or Sheik if he knew of any such craft to let.

"Then we learned the identity of our most impressive visitor. He owned such a vessel and was most anxious to have us accept the use of it—for a mere consideration, of course—providing we engaged him also for the trip."

Mr. Dalken laughed outright at the change of expression in the faces around him; and Dodo said, "What is he, then, if not the Prince?"

"Just a dragoman who is so up-to-date in this ancient land that he makes one curious regarding

his office, and instead of gratifying such curiosity at once keeps feeding it by his clever word-pictures until he knows it is safe to reveal the fact that he wishes to sell his time and trip."

"And what did you do?" was the eager question from the girls.

"How could I resist him and his dahabiye?" laughed Mr. Dalken.

"And the Captain and Jenks and Allen—what of them?" added Eleanor.

"This native's craft is waiting at Cairo. The Captain and his crew will remain on the *Atlanta*, but the two mates are to come with us on the dahabiye, to liven things up should life prove to move on too slowly for you," was Mr. Dalken's explanation.

"Surely you did not decide so momentous a change without finding out just who this fellow is?" ventured Jenks, dubious about the plan.

"No indeed! The fact is, Amin—as he is named—brought recommendations with him. It seems he has been the guide and boatman for

many of our well-known American tourists in Egypt. He is wise enough to have such testimonials witnessed and attested by a notary public, to prove they are valid.

"He also said that we were to visit his dahabiye first, and assure ourselves that we would prefer to sail the Nile on it, rather than on our own yacht.

"Naturally, after reading such letters from several millionaires in New York City, I judged the boat must be pretty good and convenient, or they would never have hired it."

"Is this Amin here now?" asked Dodo.

"Just what I was about to ask," added Eleanor. "I'm curious to meet such a magnificent native, as you think him."

"I'm safe in telling you of him, because he left the *Atlanta* just before I came to ask your opinion," laughed Mr. Dalken.

"Why ask us—you ought to know, Dalky, that we're ready for anything new that offers a thrill," replied Polly.

"Then Captain Hall may as well plan to give his two mates shore leave to-morrow, and go on with us to Cairo, where we will meet Amin and his dahabiyeh," decided Mr. Dalken.

"We're all for it," agreed Eleanor eagerly.

So it was that Polly and her companions left Alexandria the following morning, to meet the man with the manners of the Khedive, and the vessel that many other Americans had hired before them.

CHAPTER VI

NEW FRIENDS IN CAIRO

As THE train sped away from the city of Alexander the Great, the girls felt regretful, because they had not had time to visit all they wished to see. Who could tell how or when they might return once more to the romantic spot where Cleopatra added more fame to her already famous career; where Julius Cæsar, Constantine and other high lights in history played their parts; where the early Christians had their first great feud that resulted in the schism that created various sects?

"I hope Dalky will not allow this Amin to whip us away from places we are keen to visit," remarked Polly.

"He won't—don't worry!" returned Eleanor. "This Amin was anxious only to get us on board

his dahabiye in Cairo, in order to prevent Dalky from being the prey of some other guide. Now that he has the promise of having us, he will not concern himself over the time we spend—the longer we dawdle, the more money he makes—see?"

Polly laughed. "I reckon you're right."

"Of course I am! Am I not always right?" retorted Eleanor. Then she clicked the camera and said, "I pray this snap-shot turns out O.K."

Polly replied, "Of course it will! Is there anything that you do that is ever N.G.?"

A laugh behind them made the two girls turn, to see Dodo coming to join them.

"I have been listening to Mrs. Dalken's sighs, because she had not been given the time to visit ancient Alexandria, with the famous Pompey Pillar, erected by Diocletian, and the old tombs nearby. Then Ma wanted to know who this fellow with the queer name might be. I began to explain, and she interrupted me by saying, 'I can't imagine anything worth seeing in a bit of

stone like that. But I do wish we could have enjoyed a few days in those delightful European Hotels. Why, there is none better in the states!' So you see why Ma is 'tripping' Egypt."

Polly and Eleanor smiled understandingly, for every one in the party knew long ere this that Mrs. Alexander's whims and ways were incurable. The only thing to do, therefore, was to put up with them for Dodo's sake.

"Let me put myself on record right here," announced Polly. "If this Amin fellow tries to whisk us out and away from Cairo, same as he has done in Alexandria I shall rebel."

"I'll stand by you, Poll," added Dodo.

"Dalky won't stand for any high-handed orders like that!" declared Eleanor. "We came to see Egypt, and Cairo is one of its principal sights."

The Delta of the Nile offered many interesting pictures for Eleanor and Mrs. Dalken to take with the cameras; consequently the conversation with the others lagged somewhat. Dodo and

Polly gazed from the windows and were soon interested in watching peasants driving their cattle home from the pasturage which the Delta freely provides.

"If this vast tract of green were in the United States, some enterprising trust would buy it in, and then rent out grazing privileges," said Polly, after watching a bedraggled fellah urging his water buffalo out of the way of the train.

The sun was setting when the tourists realized they had arrived at the terminal of Cairo. And there, when they left the train, they found Amin awaiting them. He salaamed to each one in turn, then asked Mr. Dalken would the honorable party prefer to lodge on the dahabiye, or stop at a hotel.

"Oh, at a hotel, to be sure!" instantly replied Mrs. Alexander. "We'll suffer enough on your Nile River, once we get started."

"Yes, Amin," agreed Mr. Dalken, Master of Ceremonies; "we prefer the hotel while we are in Cairo. But I shall be glad to have your val-

uable guidance to all points of interest in and near the city."

"Then I will escort you first of all to the best hotel in the East. On our way there the ladies will see that the shops in the Place de l'Opera are as fine as any in Paris or London."

"How lovely!" exclaimed Mrs. Alexander. "I was wondering how I could replenish my wardrobe; and here I am to find everything I want."

"If you wish to see our Eastern Coney Island I can take you to Heliopolis, where the people go to enjoy an outing. They have shoot-the-chutes, ferris wheels, fortune tellers and many other American pastimes there," said Amin.

"What! A Coney Island in the famous city of Heliopolis?" was Mrs. Dalken's amazed exclamation.

Amin smiled. "The corporation that finances the enterprise is making many hundreds per cent on their investment, whereas before this Coney Island lured the people to the spot only few sight-seers went there."

"All the same it does seem shocking," returned Polly. "The city once famed as a seat of learning, now transformed into a Luna Park!"

"All the same," as Amin had said, the tourists decided to visit the place that evening.

The guide told the taxi drivers which hotel to stop at, and soon the Dalken party was deposited, bag and baggage, on the walk before an imposing building.

"Amin," said Mr. Dalken, to the guide, "I'll give you charge of the bank-roll for to-night, because you know the ropes better than I do. Being my guide—same as a confidential secretary for me in New York—I'll expect you to look after my interests, as well as our comfort. You will keep tabs on expenses and then we can balance accounts every morning. Is that satisfactory?"

"Most satisfactory, Master," was Amin's smiling reply. "I feel honored to be so trusted."

"Here is a cash sum of a hundred dollars," said Mr. Dalken, handing the money to the guide.

"Our hotel bills can be paid by my traveller's cheques, which are convenient for such accounts. Now lead on, after you pay the chauffeurs."

Meanwhile the hotel porters had taken possession of the baggage and were vanishing through the gorgeous entrance of the hotel. The girls followed, and soon the others in the party came in with the guide. Indoors they found the spacious corridors and lobby crowded with visitors.

As had happened in so many other cosmopolitan hotels during the touring of the girls in the Dalken group, these three attractive misses proved to be a magnet for all the young men in the lobby. And as usual, so accustomed were they to such admiration, they failed to notice it.

Polly and her companions waited while Mr. Dalken registered for his party and selected their rooms. Other tourists had arrived by the same train, and now, while Mr. Dalken consulted the diagram of rooms, two young men were given the register in which to write their names. Thus it happened that the first one caught sight of the

name just inscribed. He made sure he saw correctly, then turned to the man beside him.

"Mr. Dalken, I'm delighted to meet you here, at the other side of the globe from the place we met last."

Mr. Dalken turned in surprise and saw Jack Baxter's chum at college standing with hand extended in greeting.

"Well, of all things!" exclaimed he. "Who would have dreamed of finding you here?"

They shook hands and then Arthur Bevan introduced his travelling companion, Edson Rogers.

"Are you boys just coming or going?" asked Mr. Dalken, catching sight of the curious girls, who were eagerly watching the two handsome young men.

"We just arrived on the train from Port Said," explained Bevan. "Ed and I are going to take a leisurely trip up the Nile. He is an artist, and wishes to get a number of good camera pictures to work up later on canvas. But I

am deeply interested in these ancient tombs and excavations. I am writing a series of magazine articles about them."

"Oh, yes! I remember you chose a literary career at college. How do you like it?" said Mr. Dalken.

"I'm in love with it," smiled Bevan.

"But not enough to save him from being a victim of cupid's darts now," laughed his friend Rogers.

"I trust she reciprocates your tender affection," was Mr. Dalken's quizzical remark.

"I don't know whether she does or not," confessed the blushing young man. "She is not aware that I encumber the earth. I do not know her name, nor where she came from. But I am in love with her just the same."

"Not with a portrait, I hope!" exclaimed Mr. Dalken.

"Oh, no!" laughed Edson Rogers. "Not so safe as that. In fact, the object of Bevan's *amour* is just entering the hotel. She came by

the same train. The poor boy's madness is only a few hours old, but he has it bad!"

As the new trio came up to the desk to register, the other three made room. Mr. Dalken murmured to Bevan, "I think I recognize the stern gentleman. If his name on the register is the one I think it will be, you may soon meet your fate, old man."

"It will be 'good-night' for me on this Nile Trip. Bev won't go anywhere that this siren does not plan to go," said Rogers whimsically. "So some kind friend will have to adopt me."

"Then I shall have to turn you over to the kind offices of the young ladies in my party," remarked Mr. Dalken, glancing at the girls as he spoke.

At this both Rogers and Bevan looked in the same direction and were delighted to see such pretty girls watching them.

But Mr. Dalken wished to assure himself that the man who had finished writing in the register was the one he had met in New York. So he

excused himself and left the two young men for a moment.

The first glance at the register showed him the names of "John Stackley, wife and granddaughter, London, England." He smiled and returned to his erstwhile companions.

"Yes, it is the same man! Now all I have to do is to renew my acquaintance, and then introduce you as a very nice young man, guaranteed harmless if taken in mild doses. I dare not risk my reputation for the truth, by saying you are perfectly safe for two argus-eyed grandparents to trust their precious jewel to. That will be your work—to win over the gray-haired guardians."

Bevan caught Mr. Dalken's hand again and shook it wildly. "I'm a thousand times obliged to you, sir, for taking such an interest in me."

"I see they have gone already," remarked Rogers; "you missed an opportunity to meet her."

"Oh, no," replied Mr. Dalken, "you must do

these things wisely. Let them get settled in their rooms, freshened up after the train ride and ready for dinner. I will send my card up to Stackley and invite him and his family to join us at dinner. Then I will introduce you two boys at the same time I introduce my protégées—see. You will have dinner with us, and it will look as if you were members of my party.” Which told Bevan that his host was a clever man.

The two young men smiled but Mr. Dalken would not hear of young Bevan’s thanks. He laughed and said, “Come now, and meet my wife and the girls. You must become well acquainted with my party before you meet Stackley and your love!”

Nothing loath to be introduced to such pretty girls, Bevan and Rogers followed Mr. Dalken across the lobby.

“How nice it would be to have you both join us on this voyage up the Nile,” suggested Mrs. Dalken.

Then her husband remembered to invite them

to attach themselves to his party. The two young men were only too glad to do so, and thus it came to pass that Polly and her chums had two attractive escorts to wait upon them that night during the visit to Heliopolis.

Mr. Dalken sent his card and the note to ask the Stackleys to dine with him and his friends, in the hotel dining room, and later to go with his party to the playground of Cairo.

While the Dalkens were dressing for dinner Mr. Stackley's card and note of thanks were delivered. The gentleman expressed his pleasure at being able to renew a former pleasant acquaintance, and to be able to introduce his wife, and his charge, Mathilde.

"So far, so good," chuckled Mr. Dalken, the match-maker.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Mrs. Dalken, who had completed her toilette and now watched her husband arrange his tie.

"A little game of love between Bevan and Stackley's grandchild. I wonder if the girl will

like him. He's a nice young chap and I'd hate to see him turned down cold."

"Better have it over with now than wait until he is hopelessly in love," replied Mrs. Dalken. "He is only infatuated now. He *couldn't* be seriously in love with a girl he never knew, and only saw once."

"I don't know—specialists in love matters do say there is such a thing as love at first sight, you know," said Mr. Dalken thoughtfully. Then he signified that he was ready, and the two went out to find the younger members of their party.

As planned, the Stackleys became the guests of the Dalkens for the evening. Mr. and Mrs. Stackley were somewhat older than Mr. Dalken in the matter of years, but they were young in heart and soul.

After dinner the entire party drove to the pleasure resort of Heliopolis in automobiles. Amin escorted them and took charge of the arrangements. Thus Mr. Dalken was free to enjoy

himself like a boy. Even Mr. Stackley teetered over the "witching waves," and rode a wooden horse on the merry-go-round. Then they all decided to visit a genuine Arab fortune-teller, who was said to be a perfect wizard in divination.



POLLY AND HER FRIENDS VISIT THE FORTUNE TELLER.
Polly in Egypt.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT THE WIZARD SAID

AMIN said he would try to arrange with the Arab to have the entire party sit at one time, thus forming a "circle," as it is called. This suggestion pleased Mrs. Dalken, who was not very keen over allowing the girls to go in alone, one by one, in the tent with a swarthy-faced Egyptian soothsayer. The girls, however, had no such qualms, and were most eager to have their fortunes told.

It was a large party, therefore, that Amin led in to meet the old, old man. Mrs. Dalken was as surprised as any of the group when she beheld a seamed, white-haired old wizard, instead of the tall, self-confident young man she had pictured to herself.

The ancient's servant deftly arranged the seats

in a semi-circle before his master, but the seer paid no attention to aught else than the clear gazing crystal that stood in front of him upon a beautiful bronze tripod. After everyone was quiet and the attendant had brought the incense and turned down the lights, the aged necromancer lifted both thin hands above his head and muttered something in an unknown language. Then he bowed his head and stretched his hands out to include his visitors.

Polly said later to her friends that she distinctly felt strange prickles course up and down her spine. And Eleanor said she was covered with "goose-flesh" all the time.

Then the real business started. The occultist selected Mr. Dalken first and in swiftly connected sentences gave him such a "reading" that all were astounded. Mrs. Dalken came next; and she was told that a relative through marriage would come to live with her after she returned to America, and this young girl would bring cheer and happiness with her. Then he described the

girl Carola exactly, as Jack Baxter's letters had done.

So he went on, from one to another, creating speechless astonishment at all he revealed, until he came to Mathilde Stackley. He gazed at her in a kindly manner and merely said: "My child, your grandparents have an old heir-loom in the jewel box at home in England, that you should be wearing here in this land of the Pharaohs. From Egypt it came, and you should have carried it back here. Since you have not done so, I dare not say more to you now. But on your return from the trip up the Nile come hither once more and all will be clear to you then."

"Now I wish to address myself to yon young scribbler, who in this life calls himself Arthur Bevan. Note the name, friends! And you, young Mathilde, listen!"

The seer spoke in surprisingly good English. And this was the story, told with closed eyes, in a semi-trance condition, by the Arab:

"It happened 3000 years ago! A beautiful

cangia sped like the Red Man's arrow over the smooth, sluggish surface of the Nile, on its way to the resort at the Cataracts. Upon a couch, under an awning of gorgeous fabrics, reclined a handsome youth in royal apparel and his teacher friend. The owner of the vessel preferred to be known as an artist, but in every way he was the genuine aristocrat. His friend, Eh-kim, really the artist and instructor of Ad-Neh, would have preferred to be the nobleman and fortune's favorite, which his pupil happened to be.

"The quiet gaze from great thoughtful eyes, and the lofty brow of the poet, revealed at once the compassionate temperament of Ad-Neh. In sharp contrast to him was the impulsive, pleasure-loving character of Eh-kim. The teacher was never so happy as when enjoying the luxuries of his friends' tables and parties.

"Ad-Neh, resting his perfumed head upon his elbow, beckoned a Nubian slave to bring refreshments, then he turned to his friend and murmured wearily, 'Oh, Eh-kim, what have we in this life

with never a glimpse of the reality of our ideals?
'Tis starvation to our souls!'

"Eh-kim laughed musically. 'My Ad-neh, your life flows as smoothly as the Nile, and all your wishes are instantly met, therefore you cannot understand the meaning of starvation.'

"At this moment the slave knelt beside the couch and held a wrought-gold cup filled with a cooling beverage for his master to sip. Eh-kim gave his attention to the slice of cold melon served by a second slave.

"As he fully enjoyed the dainty, Eh-kim continued: 'You complain of never glimpsing a reality of your ideals? But, Ad-neh, you forget one marvelous reality presented to you—one you spurn.'

"'Speak not of that sleek little tigress that dogs my way!' exclaimed Ad-neh, momentarily roused from his apparent apathy.

"The teacher laughed at such unusual vehemence, and ventured yet another remark. 'She is the toast of every noble in the city. Such

riches, such beauty! Yet she would fling all away for the love of one indifferent young man. Ah me! that I were this cold-blooded beloved!"

"'You desire such a sweetheart? Yet you know well all her failings, and the viperish tongue which is used to further only her jealousies and her secret trickeries!' was Ad-neh's scornful rejoinder.

"'I dare not lift my eyes to such as she, but were I born of noble blood, I should wish for nothing more exciting than the privilege of taming that fierce tigress. That would be living!'

"Ad-neh turned and stared at his friend, then laughed in sheer disdain of such an ideal. How the conversation may have ended cannot be told, because the pilot of the vessel now came forward with apologies for his interruption. The young man turned languidly to listen.

"'My lord, you wished to be called, should I find a novel sight which might provide a sketch. Yonder on the river bank you may find what pleases your eye,' explained the man.

"His attention thus directed, Ad-neh sat up and gazed.

"A slender-limbed, lithe young creature, with long wavy hair blowing about her shoulders, plodded after a laden donkey. As she went, she sang sweetly, oblivious of an audience, and oblivious, as well, of the breeze which lifted the tattered scarlet skirt and revealed beautiful limbs against a background of dull sand. The motion of her arms as she urged the beast of burden along the path, tossed the old tunic back and forth and exposed her perfect bosom. The reflection of sun-rays from the glassy water seemed to cast the picture in ebony-black as in a silhouette.

"'Ah! Yonder vision makes a perfect poem,' sighed Ad-neh.

"'Pah!' sneered the teacher, 'An old and ugly peasant! As black, most likely, as a Stygian night.'

"'Tis easy to judge,' said Ad-neh. 'Turn in to shore.'

"At the master's order to the captain, Eh-kim frowned, but said nothing. In his estimation this was a sheer waste of precious time lost from the delights of the fashionable resort. But he curbed his impatience, and pretended to be deeply interested in the maiden from the market and her pack-animal.

"The spirit of adventure suggested by this unusual incident of stopping his pleasure-sail to decide whether or no the model might prove to be desirable in a picture, caused Ad-neh to get up and watch eagerly as the cangia neared the shore. Then it halted not fifty feet from the oncoming donkey and its driver.

"'By Isis! the maid is a beauty!' breathed Eh-kim, as he followed his pupil and leaped ashore.

"'No common slave, she!' added Ad-neh, in a whisper.

They beheld a beautiful face, with skin of the finest texture: the brow was high, the eyes dark and magnetic, the nose, so small, was perfectly

formed, rosy full-curved lips seemed made to pout, or to be kissed; the youthful form, erect and poised, would have won a Pharaoh's ransom. Here it moved along a donkey-path!

"'A Briton barbarian, my Ad-neh!' whispered the teacher, but gloating upon the perfection of such charms as this girl displayed.

"'Poor child! She must have been of royal lineage in her far-away isle of Briton. Torn from home and loved ones, what a life hers must be, and how she must hate those who carried her away!' was Ad-neh's sympathetic remark.

"His compassionate words were lost upon Eh-kim, who sprang forward and blocked the progress of the donkey. Ad-neh, uncomfortable at such highway procedure, followed at a distance, but said nothing to his friend.

"The girl, seemingly oblivious of anyone barring the way, urged the donkey to continue. She looked neither to the right nor to the left, ignoring the sudden appearance of the two Egyptians.

"'Come, come, Agra! On your way!' com-

manded the girl in purest Coptic, to the astonishment of the young men. Then she used the goad to compel the beast to move forward. The donkey, however, swerved aside and tried to pass Eh-kim.

"As this was not according to Eh-kim's plans, he caught hold of the grass bridle and laughingly held fast to prevent the pack-animal from moving. Ad-neh was about to protest at such action, but the girl now defended herself. Her pride had been attacked, and her duty interfered with. The slighting laugh from Eh-kim also added fuel to her scarcely curbed fury.

"The donkey, finding itself halted, relaxed upon one leg and seemed about to rest, when suddenly, with one sweep of the goad, the girl caught the beast over the ears, and the tip of the lash cut across the face of the man who dared detain her.

"With an oath Eh-kim fell back and nursed his smarting face. Ad-neh, delighted at such spirit

and self-defence, came forward and offered apologies for his companion.

“‘And now, fair stranger, we permit you to go on your way unmolested,’ added Ad-neh, as deferentially as though she were a princess of Pharaoh’s Court.

“As the girl reared a small imperious head to turn scornful eyes upon the speaker, she felt a strange sense of contact with this young nobleman. Her eyes met his and both felt that power of attraction for which there is no explanation.

“Ad-neh forgot his friend for a moment, and stepped forward to speak again, to ask how she, a barbarian from the far-away Isles, spoke such fluent Coptic. And she, with eyes still fixed on those of this Egyptian, hesitated before she spoke in reply.

“In that short space of time, Eh-kim had signalled the men from the cangia, and they, suspecting harm to their beloved master, leapt out and rushed to the spot. As they formed a circle about the little group, one giant thrust his head

forward and stared unbelievingly at the girl.

"Ad-neh started at seeing his slaves encircle himself and his friend, also the girl and donkey, and Eh-kim's added command quickly told him how this came to be.

"'Take the girl aboard, and throw the beast into the river,' ordered the artist. But the young master frowned and stiffened up.

"'Since what time have I been deposed from my own rights? Eh-kim, methinks too much pleasure has unbalanced your judgment. I gave no command for these slaves to come ashore, nor do I agree in that last order that the girl be carried away. Disperse, slaves—return to the oars.' And the young lord waved his hand as a signal.

"At this moment, however, a diversion occurred in the form of the giant. He sprang out of the cordon of fellow-slaves and fell upon his knees before the maiden. He lifted a rag of the skirt to his lips and wailed in a strange language which none but she understood.

"Then the girl turned to the Egyptian and,

with one hand resting upon the shaggy head of the young giant, explained: 'This, the son of the woman who kept me safely in hiding in my own land, begs your clemency, my lord, and wishes me to ask you that he may remain with me. True, this is a strange request from a slave girl to a lord, but know that in my own land I am a royal princess, the descendant of a king who befriended a Pharaoh, and was given this token for his deed.'

"As she spoke, the girl lifted a royal scarab from her neck, where it depended from a thin gold chain. The two Egyptians beheld the Sacred Beetle, and knew that this tale must be true else the girl would not court death by wearing the emblem of royal favor.

"'What name do we call you, maiden?' asked Ad-neh, humbly.

"'I am called Tepha, after my ancestress Tea Tepha, of the lineage of Joseph and the Pharaoh's daughter, who was a Chaldean.'

"'Then how came you here? Know you not

that Pharaoh will redeem the promise of his fore-fathers?' asked Ad-neh, astonished.

"I know that all men in this land forget duty and chivalry when they behold a slave-girl beautiful enough to stir their vile desires. I was brought to Cairo to be given to the harem of your monarch, but this youth was brought in the same ship, and he helped me to escape. Now I am freed—given my freedom by my mistress, who knew and obeyed the command of this scarab. My home is with her, and I care naught for your Pharaoh, nor for your fore-fathers!"

"During this explanation, Eh-kim stood plotting quickly, but he realized that he must not speak one word of his plans, or he would find himself in no pleasant predicament. He needed the confidence of his pupil in order to carry out his vengeance.

"Ad-neh now bestowed the young giant upon the girl and said: 'I will bring his freed-man papers to-morrow. Meantime, go in peace and trouble no more about Pharaoh or his fore-

fathers.' The thrilling glance young Ad-neh sent the girl as he delivered his decision was answered by one Tepha could not control. Both were seen by Eh-kim, who raved in his teeth and could have strangled these two.

"Joyously Ad-neh stood and watched the trio depart—Tepha, her servant, and the donkey. Then he turned to his friend, and the pilot, and said: 'We return to the city now, and I will attend to the youth's papers.'

"'Are you not continuing on to the games?' asked Eh-kim, angrily.

"'Tis too late, my friend. Besides I would hasten the freeing of yon giant that the princess may be protected.'

"Eh-kim could not rebel, for he was but an invited guest, but he could make a slurring remark, and in doing this he relieved much of his ire.

"Should the "viperish tongue" of fair Mayah lick with glee such a scandal as this will provide her arts, I would not envy the fair barbarian. Even Pharaoh may interpose his authority to pre-

vent one of his most noble courtiers from wasting his life.'

"Ad-neh closed his lips firmly, then gazed across the Nile. He wished to control his annoyance, and not lower his dignity in a reply. But Eh-kim was not of that mind. He resumed his taunts and sent shaft after shaft till his master was beside himself.

"'Naturally, Eh-kim, after all you have said, and knowing your private opinion of me and my *amours*, as you term them, our friendship must end with the arrival of the vessel at the quay. It is not pleasant to lose one's friend whom one believed in faithfully.'

"Eh-kim gnashed his teeth, and sat sullenly silent until the cangia touched at the mooring-post. Then, without another word of regret or farewell, he sprang out and hurried away. Ad-neh sighed but considered the matter closed for himself and Tepha. He had much to learn!

"A few days later, in company with a bosom friend, young Edophar, Ad-neh summoned the

cangia once more, and soon the slaves were carrying him and his guest up the Nile. In his tunic he had the freedom papers of the giant young slave he had sent with Tepha.

"Long before the cangia reached the spot where Ad-neh's romance had birth, the zealous young lover showed such impatience with the slowness of the rowers that he could scarcely restrain himself. Edophar laughed knowingly at his friend, and this served to calm him somewhat.

"The cangia now drew near the river bank, where it was Ad-neh's intention to disembark and walk to the farm where Tepha had said she lived. To his amazement, however, he saw another vessel already there. Upon drawing in close to the other boat he found it belonged to Mayah, she whom he had scarcely deigned to notice before.

"He looked at Edophar, who nodded and said: 'Eh-kim has gone to Mayah with a tale of this romantic discovery of the beautiful Briton. And we know Mayah well enough to know that she would never hesitate at anything in order to re-

move from her pathway any female more beautiful than herself.'

"Then Ad-neh decided to seek such information as he might buy from the pilot of Mayah's craft. But what was his consternation to find Eh-kim comfortably reclining upon the upper couch, while the silken curtains of the private rest-room were drawn and no one to be seen there.

"'Ah, ha! So, you, too, visit yon fair slave?' was Eh-kim's laughing taunt, as he gave the troubled lover a slanting look.

"Ad-neh swallowed his pride and replied courteously: 'I bring the freedom papers for my man. I should like to speak with Mayah before I go yonder.' He spoke the last words to the pilot in charge of the craft.

"'But you may meet Mayah on the way,' interpolated Eh-kim. 'She too is eager to behold such beauty as I described to her, and she fain would induce such a beauteous maiden, who can enslave Ad-neh's heart, to return with her to the court. There Tepha will receive her full value,

I assure you.' The manner in which these words were spoken sent an arrow of fear through Ad-neh's heart.

"Hoping to restrain Tepha from leaving her protectress at the farm, and planning to conciliate Mayah's jealousy, he started away from the river and struck inland along the faint pathway. He had not gone very far before a call from his friend, Edophar, whom he had left on the cangia, caused him to turn to see what had happened.

"Then he realized that Eh-kim had tricked him into leaving the river-bank. Mayah's cangia had started immediately after he had left there, and now was gathering speed to return to the city. The shout from Edophar had been caused by seeing a young girl, her arms bound securely, standing upon the edge of the vessel ready to fling herself into the sluggish water.

"The time it took Ad-neh to run back and spring on board his cangia and start down the stream after the escaping vessel, consumed time enough to allow Eh-kim to gain a good start.

"The following half-hour seemed to drag through an eternity for Ad-neh, who stood straining his eyes to compute every inch his rowers gained upon those in the other boat. So slow moved his own cangia that he cried out in agony, 'Row, slaves! every man here who helps me gain that vessel before it is too late, will be freed upon landing in the city!'

"Such a reward inspired the slaves to work with all their powers, and the result could be seen in the way Ad-neh's cangia gained. But now another cause for fear appeared. When Eh-kim saw that it would be but a matter of time before his adversary's vessel would overhaul the one he was on, he brought out the girl Tepha, and stood her in full view at the end of the cangia. He even pushed her so far that she would have fallen overboard had he not held her securely.

"Ad-neh knew this signal was meant to warn him not to try to come nearer or the maiden would be tossed into the river. But the young noble was a marvelous swimmer, and he had no

dread of the Nile. Rather, indeed, would he prefer to have Tepha seek safety in the river than to remain with Eh-kim, now that he had joined forces with the unscrupulous Mayah. Hence his men were urged to still greater efforts by hearing that their master would add a bag of gold to the freedom papers of each man there, should they reach and save the girl from that vulture's grasp.

"Thus the two cangias sped on as lightly as though they were birds skimming over the river-face, and the second vessel surely lessened the distance between them, till not more than two rods separated them from each other.

"'Another minute and we shall have them!' sighed Ad-neh. At that precise moment one of the oars snapped. A new oar replaced the broken one, but the time lost in the exchange gave the runaway craft its headway again.

"Because of the lost time and the slowing of the cangia, Ad-neh's slaves were breaking their muscles to regain that loss. The veins upon their foreheads stood out like whip-cords, and the mus-

cles of their shoulders and arms bunched, but they kept on gaining again.

"The slight distraction caused by the trouble with the oar had withdrawn Ad-neh's gaze from Eh-kim for a moment, and in that moment Tepha had disappeared.

"What make you of this, Edophar? What new devilment is afoot?" asked the young man in an agony of suspense.

"He had not long to wait. Suddenly a wild cry drew the eyes of Ad-neh and Edophar to witness the cause of the sound. Upon the outer edge of the fleeing cangia hung the blond giant slave who had been told by Ad-neh to watch and guard his princess. A fierce Nubian held him in full sight, while another slave held a scimitar poised aloft. But at that moment another cry echoed over the placid waters of the Nile. So absorbed had all become in the fate which hovered over the Briton's head that Tepha had crept carefully out of the curtained rest-room and gained the edge of the craft before anyone no-

ticed her escape. She was about to leap for the Nubian who threatened with the scimitar, when Eh-kim's cry to his slave caused her to jump prematurely.

"Ad-neh's breath stopped in his throat and his eyes fairly bulged from their sockets. Edophar, in this crisis, was the one with presence of mind. He commanded the small boat to be lowered quickly. He sprang into it. An oarsman followed, and rowed to the spot where the girl would be coming to the surface.

"As Tepha jumped she had manoeuvered to strike the Nubian, and he, unprepared for any shock, lost footing, so that both he and the proposed victim went headlong into the river. The girl sank so quickly that Eh-kim knew not just where she had gone down.

"Ad-neh, on the swiftly approaching cangia, kept a vigilant watch for that spot, and as he watched he threw off tunic, then robe, then sandals, and stood ready for the plunge. Then he dived!

"Eh-kim, foiled in his desperate act, commanded the slaves to return to the city as quickly as possible. He knew it would be more comfortable leagues away from Ad-neh, when he returned to publish the villainy to the court. He cared little for what would befall Mayah. She was rich and powerful and could protect herself.

"Ad-neh being an experienced swimmer, finally located Tepha entangled in the reedy river bottom. Frantically, the lover reached forth. His fingers caught in the slender chain which held the scarab. Strange to say he seemed to be able by this means to draw the maiden up through the water. Because love is the strongest bond and safe-guard in the universe."

The seer stopped abruptly and passed his old wrinkled hands across his eyes. Then he shook his head and gazed with regret at young Bevan, as he said:

"It was a romantic picture, eh? But it ended too suddenly for you. It should have been continued throughout the three thousands years,

WHAT THE WIZARD SAID 123

merely to show you who you are now, and who this young lady is."

The wizard smiled indulgently at the two he referred to, then signalled the servant, to signify that the interview was over.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCARAB

AFTER the Dalken party were out of hearing of the Arab's tent, Mrs. Dalken said, "That was one of the strangest experiences I have ever had."

"I wonder how he could tell each one of us such exact facts without having met us before?" was Eleanor's remark.

"Oh, he is a very clever mind-reader," said Mr. Dalken. "You know, these Easterners are so trained that they can demonstrate ways that to us seem like miracles. But there is a method to all such madness."

"Like the fakir in Colombo, with the coil of rope that rose right up to nowhere, and a man climbed it, then pulled the rope up after him," suggested Dodo.

"Well, that was his hypnotic power. He deluded us into *seeing* that which never happened," explained Mrs. Dalken. "But this affair to-night is trained mind-reading. It takes a different kind of a fakir to do that."

"This man is no fakir," declared Amin, who had overheard the discussion. "He is big prophet!"

No one contradicted him, and the subject was dropped for the time being. But later Arthur Bevan and his friend Rogers argued over the incident again and again. Meanwhile the Stackleys found they had more than a meek little lamb in Mathilde, in trying to convince her that the amazing story told by the Arab was all a fabrication.

"All the same, Granny," was Mathilde's positive declaration, "I feel certain that I am to meet my fate in Egypt." As she spoke her large expressive eyes turned in the direction of Arthur Bevan. He happened to be gazing her way at the time, and their eyes met; then a thrill of

memories surged through both their minds and hearts.

"I disapprove heartily of such nonsense, my child, and I propose that we leave Egypt at once, if we are to be badgered by hallucinations," said Mr. Stackley impatiently.

"Dear me, Daddy!" exclaimed Mathilde, in dread of what he might do to curtail a trip that promised all kinds of excitement now that so attractive an admirer as Arthur Bevan was in Egypt, "I've waited *years* for this visit, and now you mention such a cruel plan."

"Years!" snorted her grandfather, "Why, it was only last winter that I suggested a season on the Nile."

"Well, anyway," conceded the girl, "it is *almost* a year. An awfully long time to wait for such a treat. Now if you *do* leave, I vow that Granny and I will go on alone and meet you somewhere in Europe."

Mr. Stackley, and the others who heard Mathilde, laughed appreciatively at such spirit.

But the grandfather never referred again to the threat of running away with Mathilde.

Polly now claimed her companionship, and the two girls dropped behind the elders in the party, to join Eleanor and Dodo, who were walking with Bevan and Rogers. All were eagerly comparing notes on the readings given by the old Arab. But neither one had a solution for such uncanny work.

They all turned to Mathilde to learn if it were true that in a jewel box in her home in England there really might be such a scarab as the soothsayer had described.

"Yes," said Mathilde, "there really is! and many a time I've asked Granddaddy if there was any story connected with it. He always evaded a direct answer, but would say, 'Oh, it's been in the family for centuries!' But he never told me any legend or tale."

"I think he was startled to-night, when he heard the yarn the Arab spun for Mr. Bevan," was Dodo's remark.

"I'm sure of it. And I for one shall investigate the matter," declared Bevan. Once again his eyes met those of Mathilde, but this time she was guarded. Now she spoke jestingly.

"You'd better go about your investigations in a secret way, or you'll frighten Granddaddy away. He just proposed that we catch the next steamer for England, and turn our backs on the Nile."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Bevan, aghast at such a plan. "Why you just came yesterday."

"That's what I said. And I told him I could join Mrs. Dalken's group of girls, if he felt he ought to hurry back home," laughed Mathilde gayly.

"So that was the bone of contention, eh, when I sent Polly up to entice you away," chuckled Arthur Bevan.

"*You* sent me?" derided Polly. "I like that! Trying to steal honors where no honor is due. I merely coaxed Mathilde away in order to provide a pleasant companion for myself. Nolla

and Dodo were too engaged with two young men to speak a word to me."

Bevan and Rogers laughed, because they knew they had persisted in flirting with Polly until she marched off in disapproval and came back with Mathilde for a protectress.

That night the several members of Mr. Dakken's party that had visited the old Arab had strange dreams. Arthur Bevan dreamed he was back in the days of Ancient Egypt. But he was not a member of Pharaoh's court this time—he was a peasant, and Mathilde was the daughter of Pharaoh. How he manoeuvered to meet her again and again, until finally she consented to flee from Egypt with him, to find his old home in Briton, was an exhausting experience. Just as the two lovers succeeded in stealing away from the palace, a watchful guard spied them. Mathilde's cry of terror, when she saw the soldier swing his scimitar over her lover's head, made the dreamer leap out of bed to grapple with him. But the action woke him from the nightmare.

After breakfast the next morning, Bevan said: "What are you going to do this morning, Rog?"

"I have a little personal matter to attend to, Bev, if you will excuse me from going with you to visit any of the sights."

"Go ahead, I think I'll stroll down to that queer little junk-shop we passed yesterday—remember?" was Bevan's eager reply, that told plainly how glad he was at the plan.

Rogers nodded affirmatively, and smothered a sigh of relief—at least his friend would not expect to accompany him, nor would he be expected to go with him to the shop.

Consequently, while Rogers was busy with his own interests, Bevan wandered to the dirty little place he had mentioned.

He stood in front of the small window, which was so dusty that one could not see through into the interior of the shop. Cobwebs covered the old glass and the bodies of several dead flies were suspended in the threads of a spider's web. He stepped through the door-way and was greeted

by a wizened little man who, like everything in the place, was a genuine antique.

Bevan picked over the queer assortment of curios, hoping to find an object which might make a desirable gift for his sister. He found century-old idols, bits of jade, little figures of bronze, and a motley collection, until he had made the circuit of the tiny room. Then he came to an old worm-eaten receptacle which might be a cabinet, a secretary, a console, or some nameless thing. It had two upper drawers, one of which was partly open. The young man glanced within. A number of small curios were half-buried in dust. Almost without his own volition he automatically reached in the drawer, and his fingers closed upon a small object. The young man was astonished at the impersonal manner in which he had been influenced in this act. His brain, seemingly, had had nothing to do with the command or control of his hand.

It was too dark in the rear of the room to distinguish the dirty trifle which he held, but,

deeply interested in his occult obsession, he went to the open door to see what it could be. He drew forth his handkerchief and rubbed the outer coating of dirt from the jewel, and then saw that he had picked up an old scarab. It was so caked with dirt, however, that its beauty was but dimly visible.

What now astonished Bevan, even more than the finding of the scarab in such a dirty shop, was the peculiar sense of satisfaction, mingled with an unaccountable influx of relief, that at last he had found that for which he had sought.

"How much do you want for this?" asked Bevan of the mummied shop-keeper.

"Um-m-m scarabaeus, eh? You know her! She come from House of Amenhotep III. Some day when I not so busy, I tell you story, yes?"

"How much do you ask for it?" insisted Bevan, feeling that he *must* own it.

The old man wished to polish the scarab upon his sleeve, but the young man refused to give it up. He felt as though it was his talisman, and

no other hands must now touch it. Notwithstanding the extortionate price demanded by the old dealer for the trinket, Bevan paid it, and carefully pocketed his treasure.

* * * * *

Bevan had gone to dig up curios in the old shop and his old friend Rogers was off on a personal interest, therefore the four girls were left to amuse themselves—a very unusual experience.

Having nothing better to do, Eleanor and Dodo accepted an invitation from Mrs. Alexander to accompany her on a shopping excursion to the really splendid stores of which Cairo boasts. Mr. and Mrs. Dalken had gone to the reception given that afternoon at a prominent Shah's residence, and that left Polly and Mathilde alone for the time being.

They sat in comfortable lounging chairs on the large balcony of the hotel watching the ever changing scenes on the street below. After a time, a clever fakir took his stand in front of the hotel, and soon attracted the usual crowd of

amazed tourists. Polly and Mathilde watched as eagerly as would two boys at a circus.

The fakir produced a flock of pigeons from a small coin hidden under his handkerchief; he took countless gold pieces from the hair of an astounded boy, who stood gasping at such a performance. Everyone in the group laughed at the expression on the boy's face as he passed his hands over his hair and assured himself that nothing supernatural was growing there. Even the swarthy-skinned magician smiled.

Then the fakir spied Polly and Mathilde leaning over the railing of the balcony, and immediately he produced a short length of ordinary white string from his kit-bag. He displayed it to his audience, even measuring it to show them it was three inches short of a yard in length. Next he crumpled the string up in his hand and made a swift pass with the other palm. Instantly there appeared hanging over his arm a coil of heavy rope—the bit of string had disappeared.

He insisted upon having several bystanders ex-

amine the rope, to prove it was genuine. This he flung up in the air, so that the upper end appeared to be on a level with Polly's face, but a score of feet in distance away from the balcony.

The rope stood there as stiff and straight as though it were a rod of metal. Then the magician commanded the boy who attended him to climb up and do as he was desired.

In another moment the Arab youth was scrambling up the inch-thick rope, like a monkey climbing a stick. Polly and her friend watched with keen interest. When the boy reached the top of the rope, the upper half of it appeared to lean over towards the girls. Then to their surprise, the boy grinned at them, saluted, and just when they thought he must be dashed against the rail, he vanished! The rope began to coil, beginning to roll from the ground up, and finally disappearing in the air high above the hotel roof.

Other marvelous tricks were done by the fakir before he sent the boy to take up a collection from the audience. Finally he moved on, to re-

peat his magic wherever he might find a fertile soil for the harvesting of coin.

Polly and Mathilde sat back and discussed the recent performance. Then Mathilde said, "But these stunts were like child-play in comparison to the wonders the fakirs in India do."

"We witnessed a few such," returned Polly. "In Colombo, Mrs. Alexander was a victim of the magician's trick with a snake. He had been handling it coiled up in his lap, when suddenly it disappeared. We stood in a semi-circle around him at the time. She held her sun-shade up to keep the sun from ruining her complexion.

"Without warning we suddenly beheld the snake coiled up on top of her parasol, apparently asleep there. She was not aware of it, and asked Mr. Dalken where the reptile could be. Dodo blurted out, 'The last place on earth you'd expect to find it, Ma.'

"Mrs. Alexander saw our eyes focussed at something on her sun-shade and she looked up through it. She said she saw the dark shadow

made there by the serpent, but the snake-charmer declared later that it could not have been so because the snake never left his lap. He explained to Dalky—when he was sternly taken to account for performing a trick that so frightened the ladies—that the whole act of seeming to behold the snake up on that parasol was the result of optical delusion, brought about by his understanding of how to use his occult forces. Then he explained.

"He said that everyone has the power to do the same tricks if one would develop the gift. He says we have a center in the body, in the throat region, that when aroused works directly with the pituitary gland. This gland controls the clairvoyant eye, that is located between the eyebrows. By understanding the art of hypnotising others, one can so influence the subject that he imagines he is seeing and hearing things; but it is all the mental picturing of the adept. He imagines that which he wishes others to see, and by using the developed force from the throat, he

actually projects such visions from his clairvoyant center, and we think we see them.

"It sounded so easy that Nolla and I tried it, but nothing resulted," admitted Polly, with a smile.

Mathilde listened with interest, then when Polly had finished explaining, she said, "That is exactly what I wanted to know. I was sure there was some sort of hokusokus about the miracles we saw in Bombay, and other cities of India. Father jeered at everything they did, but Mother was convinced that she actually had witnessed supernatural incidents. I wouldn't commit myself, because I thought there would be a logical explanation, if one knew how to find it."

"Then you were in India?" questioned Polly. "I was crazy to visit the famous cities and sights we read about at home, but Dalky said he would bring us back at another time. Do tell me your experiences."

Mathilde then replied, "You know Grandmother is easily influenced in her religious faith.

In England she used to be a loyal Episcopalian, until Christian Science became popular. Then she embraced that faith and was forever preaching to Granddaddy about the 'error' of smoking a cigar every day, and the 'error' of drinking coffee and tea.

"Fortunately for Grandpa her interest waned when we got in the World War. That was the period when spiritualism rose to such a height that Grandmother went into *that* head over heels. From her zeal in spiritism it was but a step to the study of theosophy. So now she calls herself an old soul that has been incarnated on earth seven times. She says this is her last testing time on earth. But Grandfather merely smiles and looks wise."

"It was Grandmother who managed to get him to visit the Orient. She felt sure she would find a clue to her last incarnation here, by consulting a master in the mountains, where they stay to work and meditate."

"And did she succeed?" asked Polly eagerly.

"She won't confess," laughed Mathilde. "She says Grandpa and I are too material in our desires to understand all she has been told."

"Maybe she will talk to me about it," said Polly, "I am really interested in these occult ideas since coming to the Far East and realizing all it actually means for the world."

"Oh, Polly!" warned Mathilde anxiously, "if you are not careful, you'll catch the disease too, just as Grandma got it."

Polly smiled, "I think I caught it long ago. We knew a Mr. Fabian in New York—Nolla and I—and he used to talk to us of the many amazing truths to be discovered by those who conscientiously seek for it. And the way he explained it was so easy and simple. Of course, he never mentioned the magic tricks these fakirs can do, because all that is not really a part of truth, but merely goes to prove what can be done by the mind of man, once he gains dominion over his body centers."

"Yes that's exactly what Grandma's teacher

told her!" declared Mathilde. "I'm sure she will enjoy talking with you, Polly."

"And I will appreciate the things she will be able to tell me about these old masters and their teachings," returned Polly.

Bevan went back to the hotel with a sense of keen satisfaction—as though he had accomplished the deed that lured him to Egypt.

When he confessed his strange sensations to the group of girls sitting in the great lobby waiting for the Dalkens, they laughed. But Mathilde whispered, in order to prevent her granny from hearing, "I know just how it is: I felt the same way the moment we put foot in Cairo."

"Well, you two must be reincarnated souls," laughed Polly. "You were swarthy-skinned Egyptians thousands of years ago."

"Oh, no! you forget the Arab said I was a princess, taken a slave in Briton," was Mathilde's retort.

"You really do not believe that, do you?" demanded Bevan.

"I don't know," stammered Mathilde.

"I believe it!" was Bevan's courageous confession. "And I believe more than the old wizard told us, too."

He had need of courage then. Not only the two girls, but his friend Rogers, who strolled up in time to hear the declaration, laughed merrily. Only Mathilde was grave and looked at the confused young man with approving eyes. That repaid him!

CHAPTER IX

MRS. ALEXANDER'S SHEIK

MRS. ALEXANDER was all alone. She had returned from her shopping tour with Dodo and Eleanor in high dudgeon. She had taken offense at her daughter's advice regarding a dress she wished to purchase and so she showed her displeasure by immediately buying the gown, then leaving the two girls to go on alone, while she drove back to the hotel.

But she learned from the hotel clerk that the Stackleys had gone with a guide to visit one of the Arab Mosques; the Dalkens had gone to a reception given by a political notable of Cairo; and the two young men, Bevan and Rogers, had disappeared. No one had seen Mathilde and Polly, hence there was no report on their actions.

Mrs. Alexander walked around, seeking diver-

sion for the rest of the afternoon. She almost wished she had not been so hasty with Dodo, in the stores. At least she might have enjoyed several more hours in shopping, had she only acted with less impetuosity!

"At the same time," she murmured to herself, "Dodo had no business to tell me I was too mature looking to wear the crepe gown that I think so becoming. The idea of her telling me that it was meant for a young flapper! I'll show her to-night whether I'm too mature to wear such a sweet frock!"

Mrs. Alexander had been walking slowly across the large *patio* of the hotel, unaware that she might attract attention by her mumbling. So it was that a very striking man, dressed in ultra-style, saw and heard the lone woman. He noted her apparently rich apparel, her precious jewels, which she loved to display at all times, and her lack of escort. This offered him an opportunity seldom handed to him on a golden platter, so to speak.

He was not the man to ignore such opportunities.

Mrs. Alexander strolled to an artistic alcove and sat down in a comfortable willow rocker. A small table beside her suggested tea. The huge potted palms suggested coolness, and the fluttering awnings provided refreshing shade. She looked about for a bell, or other signal, by which an attendant could be summoned, when the distinguished foreigner sauntered past her alcove.

As though surprised pleasantly to find her so unexpectedly, the gentleman halted, lifted his hat, and bowed obsequiously to Mrs. Alexander. She, not sure who he was, and thinking she had met him before, smiled and responded to the greeting.

"So very fortunate for me, dear Madame, that I happened to pass here just now," remarked the black-eyed man. "I was thinking not long ago that I should like to know you and Mrs. Dalken better. It is seldom that I find two ladies so charming and engaging."

The speaker, watching intently while he spoke,

noted the reception of his words. He felt encouraged to continue at Mrs. Alexander's smile.

"Perhaps you do not remember meeting me last night. It is not to be wondered at, when you have such a number of devoted friends to obey your slightest word," said this stranger. "But I cannot forget so readily, my dear lady. I love all Americans, but those in particular who are artistic enough to blend with their surroundings and become a part of the picture—as you have the rare faculty of doing."

Mrs. Alexander did not throw ice water on such compliments from a man she could not remember, try as she would to recall where and when she had met him. Dodo, had she been present, most likely would have said, "My! but he is a fast worker!" But Dodo was not there, and her mother was left a target for any crafty designer.

"Won't you sit down and have a cup of tea?" was Mrs. Alexander's invitation. "I was just going to order it."

The handsome man instantly turned and beckoned a uniformed servant. Then he politely accepted the gracious invitation from Mrs. Alexander.

The waiter hurried up, took the order for tea and native cakes and went away, leaving the lady in a mood that was akin to flirtation. To think that so handsome a man had been thinking of her since the night before! And now, here he was eager to entertain her, just when she wondered what she could do to kill time.

But the admirer did not allow her much time to think—he produced a jewel-studded cigarette box and offered Mrs. Alexander a gold-tipped cigarette bearing a monogram.

She giggled—for all the world like a silly schoolgirl who knows she is naughty when she breaks a rule—and took one. “You know, Mr.—Ah—” began Mrs. Alexander.

“There now!” declared the dark-eyed admirer. “I was sure you had forgotten me—my name is Lord Munda Bey. My mother—bless her soul

—was an English earl's daughter, and my father was an Arab prince. He still enjoys life in Paris; but I have to look after all his vast interests in this country. That is why I am in Cairo at this time. I drove in to arrange for the sale of our great caravan of merchandise, which will arrive to-morrow. How lucky for me that I should be here at such an opportune moment!" His very expressive eyes said more than his tongue, and Mrs. Alexander was enchanted at having won a real Arabian sheik as an admirer! Now what would Dodo say, when she found that her "mature-looking" mother had carried away such a trophy, while the younger girls were still wondering about sheiks.

Lord Munda Bey must have been an accomplished mind reader, for his next words fitted so well with the lady's thoughts.

"Mrs. Alexander, I really cannot believe that you have a daughter—yet I was told that Miss Dodo called you mother! I said impossible! they must be sisters. Now do tell me, dear madame,

are you masquerading as a married woman?"

This was the sort of compliment that always won Mrs. Alexander at once. Now she smirked fetchingly and lisped sweetly, "Oh, no indeed! my dear Lord Bey. I really am a settled old lady!" Then she laughed at the absurdity of calling herself an "old lady."

The handsome Arab shook his head unbelievingly, but the coming of the servant with a tea service interrupted the conversation for the time being. Then Mrs. Alexander said she preferred to pour the tea. There was nothing to detain the waiter, so he was dismissed, and the couple were alone again, to resume their engaging amusement—at least, it was amusing and gratifying to the lady, and the gentleman hoped to prove it remunerative to himself if his companion developed further foolishness.

There were few hotel guests in the court at that hour, and the two in the alcove were not disturbed. Mrs. Alexander served the tea, and Lord Munda Bey passed the cakes and finally the

sweets, which always accompany an order from the pantry in Eastern hotels.

In a short time then these two mutual admirers were making rapid strides in friendship. Lord Munda Bey described the unique magnificence of his desert home in the great oasis that had been in the famous Bey family for hundreds and hundreds of years. He told his attentive listener how his father's tribe would fight and die for him. He described the manner of living in an oasis, and how novel the camel rides were; in fact he worked so on his companion's shallow mind that she finally said enthusiastically:

"Oh! what wouldn't I give to be able to visit such a place! An oasis, with the romance of the centuries still pervading its life! What an experience that must be."

"Yes," admitted the sheik, "it is the only way to realize true Egyptian life. No one finds it in Cairo, or on the Nile River, for all this is commercialized now by tourists' companies."

"Perhaps you can arrange to have us return

with you, and visit your garden of Eden in the desert?" suggested Mrs. Alexander.

But this was not according to the lord's plan. He moved closer to Mrs. Alexander and said in a low voice that trembled with suppressed emotion, "Beautiful lady! Pardon me for losing my self-control, but I must have my say! Remember I am a son of the desert! I have never had to sacrifice a least desire, nor do I obey others. When I say 'go'—all hasten to go. When I say 'come,' it is done. My word is supreme law to my tribe of over 5,000 followers. Hence you see, I do not take to the bit very well, to curb my speech."

While he explained thus, Mrs. Alexander cast her eyes modestly upon her beringed fingers. She was sure this impetuous young Arab had fallen desperately in love with her, in spite of the knowledge that she was a married woman, and the mother of a young lady engaged to be married. She had heard of cases where these handsome Arabs loved women older than she was,

and she knew she looked as young as Dodo!

Because she kept her eyes lowered, gazing at her hands, she failed to see the expression in the snapping black eyes of the man beside her, as he appraised the value of the large diamond earrings, the wide collar about the throat, thickly set with rare gems, the diamond bracelet and rings, and the rope of genuine pearls always worn by Mrs. Alexander. She had been told again and again, by family and friends, that the weakness of loving to show her jewelry would get her in trouble some day. But thus far she had escaped unmolested, and had come to think she was immune from hold-ups.

Lord Munda Bey took one of the willing hands and held it. She thought he was too thrilled to speak; but he was computing mentally how much a solitaire of three carats might bring in a hasty sale in a certain bazaar in Cairo!

Now he resumed his fascinating flattery.

"To-night Luna, the queen of night, will be full. She sheds her silvery light abroad over the

rolling sands of the desert in a way no pen or paint can describe. Only with the eyes can such beauty be seen and felt.

"I have naught to engage me this evening, dearest, beautiful lady, but I am at your least, or greatest command—to do your bidding. A new experience for me, who never yet obeyed another.

"Now I have been thinking how wonderful it will be for us to take a camel ride out to the camp where my caravan will be resting for the night. I can arrange to have two beasts waiting for us just outside the city limits. I will drive you there in my automobile, and no one shall be the wiser. I will see that you are safely returned to the hotel before midnight, if you so desire. But you will enjoy the genuine spirit of the desert at night, and see sights such as few have the privilege of visiting. The true sons of the desert seldom are seen by tourists in Egypt, though I will confess that most of them would be glad to pay any price for such a treat. It is only when a chieftain of the tribe, such as I am, takes enough

interest in a visitor, that one is invited to visit the genuine Arab family.

"I would add, dear lady, that I desire with all my heart to bestow a souvenir upon you—one that you will remember as coming from one of your most humble, yet most devoted admirers—and that souvenir is now in a pack on my own favorite camel in the caravan.

"How fitting it will be to present it to you in the still solitudes of my desert, under the benign light of a moon such as only Egypt can produce!"

Any other than Mrs. Alexander would have stared such a brazen man out of countenance, or would have called an official to have him arrested at once. But then no clever trickster, such as this handsome rascal was, would have dared take such chances with anyone else. It had been plain as print to this watchful dodger, that Mrs. Alexander was so fond of display, and so beset with foolish pride that she could be made to believe any silly tale. Therefore he had no difficulty

in proving his keen judgment to be correct.

After another half hour of listening to her "sheik," as she loved to think him, and drinking in his honeyed flatteries, she was persuaded to accept his strange proposition, to ride across the desert that moonlight night, with no other escort or friend, merely for the satisfaction of proving to herself and to Dodo that she was not too "mature looking" to attract and capture a genuine lord of the desert.

Having made plans to meet directly after dinner that evening, on a side street of Cairo, where no one would wonder at an American woman going in an automobile for a drive with a dark-skinned companion, the two parted—Mrs. Alexander to go to her room and call a maid to dress her hair anew, then to select a gown that would not look too elaborate for such an outing, directly after the dinner in the hotel; and the so-called sheik to hasten away to seek his confederate in the plot.

Mrs. Alexander had no idea of the discomfort

she might have in trying to ride camel-back in a fashionable dinner dress, but blissfully pictured herself seated up in a canopied chair, such as the elephants in Ceylon bore upon their backs.

She appeared in one of her "creations" from Paris. So completely covered with glistening beads was this gown that gems or jewelry would have been entirely out of place with it. Therefore Dodo insisted that her mother lock up her valuables, and leave them in the hotel safe that night. Mrs. Alexander agreed that the dress was really more effective without her usual string of pearls or the "dog" collar. But she did insist upon adding her fresh-water pearl earrings at the last moment. Dodo sighed but said nothing.

Mother and daughter appeared together in the lobby. While Dodo took the jewel box over to the desk to be checked for her mother, Mrs. Alexander gazed eagerly around in hopes of seeing her Sheik.

At dinner she ate little. She felt as nervous as a girl of sixteen about to run away and meet

her best beau for the evening. When the Dalken group finally left the table, Dodo's mother managed to separate herself from her friends. It was then a very easy thing to escape from the hotel by way of a side entrance.

She had brought a dark evening wrap, and being well-covered by this, she hurried unmolested along the street until she reached the appointed rendezvous. She saw many automobiles parked here, but no big handsome Arab chieftain watching for her.

She waited for a time, then wondered if she had misunderstood the directions given her that afternoon. She walked to the corner, made sure of the street, then returned slowly again to her former place.

Arabs came, and Arabs went, but no sheik! The poor dupe waited and waited, until more than a full hour had passed by without a glimpse or a sign from the one particular Arab she was expecting. Finally she realized that there would be no satisfaction in wasting more time there.

Sadly, yet not a wiser woman, she turned her foot-steps back in the direction of the hotel. On the way she kept worrying over her darling Lord Munda Bey—she was sure he must be sick. Or perhaps some unexpected accident had prevented him from sending word to her.

In one sense she was right. Her sheik was feeling sick, dreadfully sick! Because he had been watching unseen in the lobby, and had seen his proposed victim appear minus all her valuable gems. What were a pair of simple earrings to him when he had expected to make a clean “get-away” with thousands of dollars worth of jewels? Consequently Lord Munda Bey vanished completely, and Mrs. Alexander was spared a most humiliating experience, to say naught of the danger she might have been in.

She retired early that night, to the surprise of her daughter, but she never breathed a word of the tryst that was never kept. Still she never doubted such a handsome admirer, nor did she suspect the truth—that the only thing that pre-

vented her from being a victim of a clever hold-up was the fact that she could not very well wear her costly jewels with the gown she chose to appear in for that desert trip in the moonlight.

CHAPTER X

THE SIROCCO'S BRIDAL

That night Jenks and Allen arrived in Cairo, with the welcome news that Captain Hall could dispense with their assistance during the overhauling of the yacht and its preparations for the homeward voyage across the Atlantic. Thus the two mates were free then to take the trip on the Nile in the dahabiye with the Dalken party.

For a whole week Polly and her friends were on a constant "go," visiting the sights in and around Cairo. They took pictures of churches and mosques, of bazaars and camel trains, of the Tombs of the Mamelukes—and many snapshots of the Pyramids and the Sphinx on the day they spent on this outing.

Then Amin hinted that the sail on the Nile would refresh their fagged senses, and on their

return to Cairo, they would doubly enjoy the remaining points of interest.

Mr. Dalken insisted that the Stackleys, also Bevan and Rogers, be his guests on this trip, and they gladly accepted the hearty invitation.

Hence, the following morning at daybreak, the commodious dahabeah started for the leisurely trip up the Nile in quest of adventure. As the sun rose higher in the heavens not a breath of air stirred the face of the river. The two young men were stretched out under an awning, lazily watching the rush-lined banks of the river and the widening ripples made by the boat as it glided through the tawny stream. All was so quiet that the wallowing and the whispering of crocodiles in the reedy marshes could be heard distinctly as the boat slipped past.

"I have the queerest sensation, Bev," remarked Rogers, in a whisper to his chum; "it seems to me that I have been on this trip before. Why, I can almost tell you what we shall see as we advance. Even those crocodiles are faintly

familiar—as if I had heard them in the dim past."

Bevan gazed at his practical friend, and said: "I'm glad to hear that confession. Now I'll show you something which has made the deepest impression upon my mind. I shall not try to account for it, but I will tell you how I found it, and then leave it to your own judgment. You know how strange I have felt since coming to Egypt, and I believe there is a connecting link somewhere between my presence here and the mysterious experiences which seem to come out of the past."

Thereupon Bevan took the scarab from his vest pocket and handed it to his friend. As Rogers examined it carefully, Bevan described how he came by it. After scrutinizing the sacred symbol for a time, Rogers returned it to its owner.

The soothing swish of the water against the nose of the dahabeah, faintest echoes from the marsh-denizens, the heat of the day, and the comfortable lounges finally proved the means of

turning such serious talk to a lighter, merry vein of interest.

Mrs. Dalken joined the group of young folks with welcome information. "Amin says we should not be contented with visits to Karnak, Abydos, Thebes and Philæ, but we ought to sail on to the upper Nile, which will carry us through a section of Nubia, where we shall be in the most ancient land known to antiquarians. Amin has me so enthused over his descriptions of the Second Cataract, and the wondrous coloring of Nubia that I persuaded Dalky to agree to the extension of the cruise."

Of course, the young people rejoiced, too, since this plan would afford them more time and leisure to enjoy each other's company. Once they returned to Cairo, the two mates would have to hurry away to the yacht, Bevan and Rogers would have to say *adieu*, and the Stackleys would go back to England.

"Also, Amin says he will tell us a true story of love this evening, after the moon rises. I told

him we would watch eagerly for the rising of Luna, and expect him to make good his promise," added Mrs. Dalken.

Consequently, at nine that night, Amin found his audience impatiently watching his coming. He smiled and sat down, Arab fashion, in front of them and said "I am flattered by such attention." Then without more preliminaries he began the tale so beautifully told in the poem by an American writer.*

"The flame-colored sphere that blazed in the jade-tinted sky over the great desert in Egypt drove the milch-goats to seek the cooling lave of the spring which had created the green oasis. The mongrel dogs, herders of the cattle, dragged their wilted forms here, then there, seeking, seeking always for a spot less heated than any they had yet found, to cool their blood. As they sought one hot place after another without finding relief, their protruding tongues dripped frothy saliva continuously. The camels of the

* Dr. F. W. Becker.

caravan which had entered the peaceful oasis that forenoon, moved restlessly with the throbbing heat of their weary bodies, and as they moved, the bells on their harness jingled musically. Now and then a snatch of girlish laughter, or a merry word from a camel driver, sounded from the dwellings of the oasis.

"All these familiar sounds of her every-day life passed unheeded now by Sepha. Her slender youthful form had stood in the deep shadow cast by the marble gate-way since the travelling caravan had entered there and had brought no news of her lover, who was to have met them and travelled over the trackless waste in their company.

"Over her head drooped branches of the purple-fruited date, but she had no eyes for this. Beside her, softly murmuring, ran the silvery stream from the spring which had birth in the center of this tiny minaretted desert city, but Sepha had no ears for the song of the rill. A love-bird flew down from its nest in the date-palm

and alighted upon her smoothly rounded shoulder, a devoted dog lifted his parched tongue and licked her nervous hand, a desert reptile slid across her slim foot, but all these were unfelt by the anxious watcher, who gazed longingly, and waited patiently, as she gazed across the sterile, silent eternity of sand.

“‘O Allah, be good to us! O Allah, be kind, and shield my love from the scorching midday sun,’ was the whispered prayer, as Sepha’s sweet lips trembled with fear and anxiety.

“As she offered her petition to Allah, the faithful dog growled deep in his throat and the rough hair of his back rose along the spine as though it had been ruffled by an unseen hand. He fixed his starting eyes upon the far horizon and then turned, with tail suddenly whipped between his hind-legs and ears flattened back, and made for the protection of the inside wall. The love-bird twittered a faint warning to her mistress and flew back to the nest in the date-palm. The desert lizard had gone down into its subterranean

burrow. But the maiden, trouble now plainly etched upon her brow, leaned forward staring at what she thought was a faint motion afar.

"Then she sighed in relief, and rapturously she gave a gladsome cry. 'O Allah, be praised! My love! My lord returns in safety. Allah, be merciful to those caught afar from home in this fiery wind of the desert.'

"Now she watched joyously and beheld the silhouetted form of her noble lover as he rode his Arab steed like a centaur. She saw him bend forward eagerly as he gazed in the direction of the oasis-home where he knew his love awaited his coming. She smiled as she beheld his outstretched arms to her foretelling the welcome he would give her. And even as she smiled in anticipation of the joy to come, she saw the beloved image fade slowly from her vision. She rubbed troubled eyes—she gazed again.

"'O Allah! bring my love safely to his earthly paradise. See, I wait! I watch for his coming, O Allah! Hear me.'

"But the joyousness was gone from her voice. The light had faded from her eyes. Her heart fainted within her. Well she knew the toll taken by the flaming tongues of fire which danced upon the shelving waves of dazzling sand! Had it not taken father, then brother? But it should not take her lover!

"Swiftly, silently, Sepha sped back within the gates and sought in her nearby home for a gourd of cool water. With this and a great cluster of ripe dates, she ran unseen, unheard by others, and reached once again the outside gate. Once again she shaded her straining eyes with her tiny hand, and saw that beloved form upon its prancing steed, but back of the vision came the sirocco.

"'My love! My lord so true, I come with drink and food. On the wings of the wind I come to thee with succor for thy faint body. O Allah! Hold back the hour of doom!' So prayed Sepha, as she sped across the blistering sand in the direction of the rider she had seen battling with the blowing sand.

"Forgetful of all but the fear that Mahab was fainting for refreshment, she flew like a swift gazelle. No thought of self clouded her eyes. No fear of the storm dragged at her feet. Oblivious of all but the lover who panted for drink, and fainted for food, she ran on. Even though she no longer beheld his form, she knew the place where he had appeared, and she knew the wind and sand could not hide him from her sight once she reached that great hillock.

"Into the very teeth of the sirocco flew Mahab's Arabian horse. With a groan of despair the youth lifted his eyes in the direction of the green oasis, and lo! He saw the vision of his fair loved one standing outside the gates waiting and watching for his coming. He stretched forth his arms in a yearning to hold her close to his breast, and he prayed fervently: 'O Allah! hear, for thou art great! Guard my love at the Marble Gate.'

"Quickly the vision faded. Mahab bended low the better to see. Afar, yea, so afar that it

seemed but a dot, the grove and desert met, but he saw no watcher there.

"From a monotonous waste of aridity the great desert now pulsed as if with imprisoned life. Its bosom heaved. Its willowy tentacles of sand now coiled, now uncoiled, they reached forth, then receded, as if to hesitate in devouring the gentle ones within the snare.

"Sepha saw and understood the signs. 'Allah! now give strength to my feet, and power to my heart, that I may reach my love in time.' But her weary feet stumbled over a swirling wave of hot sand.

"Suddenly now, the far-distant coils of the desert's grim purpose appeared to awake with an energy and eagerness dire to behold. Great billows rose and avalanched over and over each other. The sheets of whirling gravel formed a mask of stalking death. The sirocco spread far and wide. From golden, the hue of the sand now changed to amber, from amber, to dazzling silver-white, from white to sullen gray.

"Still Sepha, now exhausted, kept bravely on. 'Allah! O Allah, support my feet!' cried she, plaintively, as she sank upon a piling mound and there stretched forth her arms to the blurred distance where last she saw the mirage of her dear love. 'O come! My love, I faint—I die! Allah, give ear, bring quickly my—'

"On the desert's flaming bosom of fiery expanse, in the wake of the sirocco shrieking on in fiendish blasts, stands an Arab, panting, fainting. Beside him mounds the sepulchre of his fated blooded steed, and yonder, scattered, are the precious bridal gifts. With brain awhirl, and heart so weak, what hope of ever reaching the Marble Gate? Yet Mahab peers through the storm-cloud's trail, and seeks out the place where the desert and oasis meet—where waits his paradise.

"'O Allah! hear, for thou art great! Guard my love at the Marble Gate.' But he starts! He bends low to see. What is this? Lo! his love so near, calling out to him?

"The wings of love may droop and the pinions of love may fall, but the soul of love lives on and on.

"'O Allah, be good! Bring me my love where'er she be!' was Mahab's vehement prayer, as he stumbled through the hot waves. His feet faltered, and his heart was spent, and the desert wind mocked him in ghoulish glee.

"Swiftly fell the shadows of the purple Libyan night when Phœbus drew the curtains over all the fading light. But Allah was good, for Allah was nigh, and Allah gave ear to the lovers' cry!

"One step more, then sank the Arab. His hand groping for support, grasped a raven lock which curled upon the sand. With renewed life he brushed and brushed the sand aside.

"'O Allah be praised!' and he clasped his love to his dying breast. 'O Allah be good, and bring us home.' His eyes grew dim, and his voice grew faint, but Allah was good, for Allah was there, and Allah took the lovers home fore'er and e'er."

When Amin finished his story, his audience were too impressed to think of applause. The guide understood perfectly, and with a smile of satisfaction stole away to his room without a word.

CHAPTER XI

BEVAN'S BRAVERY

"If there is any part of the world that is more beautiful and attractive than Egypt, I want someone to tell me how to find it," said Polly, as the dahabiye skinned over the rippling waters of the Nile.

"Were it not for this marvelous river, Polly, there would be no beauty in Egypt to rave over," replied Mr. Dalken.

"I suppose this whole scene of green shores and perfumed flowers would be a vast desert," observed Mrs. Dalken. "How dreadful to think it might have been the Sahara."

"Exactly! and that is why all the ancients built their cities along the river; they could never exist in the great wastes of land."

"How different is this famous stream to our

Hudson," remarked Eleanor. "It doesn't hurry, or roar, or gurgle. It just goes along quietly, and minds its own business—that of providing moisture to the palm-fringed shores, and the different forms of life that depend on it."

"I think the sunrise hour is the loveliest time on the Nile," said Polly.

"Oh, I don't!" exclaimed Dodo. "I like sunset with its gorgeous purples and amber, and ruby colors."

"So do I," abetted Eleanor.

"I prefer moonlight," added Mathilde, "with its calm, soothing reflection of silver upon everything you view."

Mr. Dalken laughed, "You each gave us a key to your characters then: Polly, who loves to be up at daybreak and hustle around. Dodo and Nolla, who prefer bed in the mornings, but are busy enough at sundown. And Mathilde who is a dreamer and can now appreciate the Queen of Night in Egypt."

"Do you know," said Mrs. Dalken, at this

moment, "even if there were no ruined temples and ancient tombs to visit in Egypt, it would still be a wonderful land to visit. Where else in this world could you lounge luxuriously in a modern deck-chair placed on an ancient-type sailing craft, and drift along, while continually watching such scenes as that mud-village just passed, with its myriad of pigeon cotes crowning every rooftree? And now look at those picturesque native women, filling odd water jugs to carry to their homes. Farther down the river I can glimpse a string of camels plodding along. When we are nearer them we doubtless will find they are laden with merchandise, with which to traffic with the Arabs who live in the desert. Right ahead of our vessel, with red legs half under water in the rushes are fascinating birds fishing for their breakfasts. Perhaps Moses was asleep in his basket in that very spot where the stately flamingoes are fishing."

"Not breakfast, my dear," laughed her husband, "but luncheon. You forgot that the birds

are up at dawn for their breakfasts. They do not waste their precious hours in bed."

"I should think you would take heed of such fine habits, Dalky, and do as the pelicans and flamingoes over there," giggled Eleanor.

"So I shall, as soon as I am rested enough to make such an effort," retorted he.

"I love to imagine the scenes described in the Bible," said Polly, reminiscently. "Joseph, with his marvelous gift of divination, standing before Pharaoh to interpret his dream. Then his marriage to the noble woman who was the mother of his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Then picture the old man, Jacob, coming to visit his lost son in the times of the famine, and going away finally with all the corn he needed for his family."

"I suppose that is how the phrase 'There's corn in Egypt' originated, eh," said Dodo.

"Oh, folks will make slang expressions out of anything, even from sayings in Scriptures," returned Eleanor.

The guide Amin now came up and said the

boat was nearing the statue of Rameses II. Also the Pyramids of Sakkara, the Serapenm, and the tomb of Thi could be visited if they cared to do so.

"Of course we do," declared Polly. "We wish to see everything on this cruise."

Therefore the dahabiye made slow progress along the Nile, because so many stops were made. At night Amin managed to anchor, or "Tie up" as he called it, near some historic place, thus allowing his passengers to visit on shore by light of the full moon.

The party were about two hundred miles from Cairo when Arthur Bevan was given an unexpected opportunity to test his courage.

It was sunset hour, and the boat was plunging through the turquoise-colored water in order to reach a destination Amin had decided upon for that night. The sky was rapidly changing colors, from gold and magenta to pale amber and lavender. The marvelous reflections from the sky tinted the dahabeahs which flitted past like



IN A FEW STROKES MORE BEVAN CAUGHT HOLD OF HER.
Polly in Egypt.

Page 181

birds winging their ways to nest for the night.

Soon the turquoise and emerald of the river would change into a darkly shaded mass, with lapping waves rolling white-crested against muddy banks, or tossing playfully against the sides of the vessel.

The young folks were lounging on deck, admiring the far-away looming sand hill silhouetted against the opal sky. Mathilde was leaning against the rail, her back to the river, and her face towards Arthur Bevan, who stood in front of her talking visions and dreams, and their value to one in a prosaic world.

The *Khedive*, the name of Amin's vessel, swung suddenly out to mid-stream, and the passengers were made unexpectedly to swerve unsteadily. Mathilde not having hold of anything, and not standing firmly upon her feet, was thrown sideways. Before anyone knew what was taking place she was rolled from the deck and plunged into the river.

Her scream and the frightened cries of her

companions brought the elder members of Mr. Dalken's party hastening to the spot. But Arthur Bevan had not lost time. He threw off his light coat and kicked off his canvas shoes. In another moment he took a swift appraisal of the river and went in head first.

The clanging of the bell and the excited shouts of Amin and his crew mingled with the cries and hysterical sounds of the different members of the touring party. Mr. Stackley was determined to jump overboard to rescue his grandchild, and all his associates had their hands full in preventing him. Mrs. Stackley had fainted dead away when she heard of the catastrophe; so Mrs. Dalken was fully occupied in trying to revive her.

Mrs. Alexander, probably for the first time in her travels, proved to be of some service. She had her smelling salts and was considerate enough to offer them to Mrs. Dalken to apply to the unconscious woman.

Meantime Arthur Bevan was swimming with powerful strokes, back to the spot where he had

seen Mathilde go under. Before he could reach it, however, he saw her head appear again.

He shouted with all the strength of his sound lungs, "I'm coming. Keep up, my dearest!"

He never knew he had used such an endearing term, but Mathilde, in her panicky fears, registered the unusual name, and the tone of trembling love. Perhaps the surprise that instantly communicated itself to brain, thence to the nerves and muscles of her body, caused them to work spasmodically. The result was that she whipped the water with her hands, and thrashed madly with her feet—thus keeping herself afloat unconsciously.

In a few moments more Bevan caught hold of her; and, by dint of experienced methods learned in college, he towed her slowly back in the direction of the boat.

Amin had stopped the *Khedive* and was backing it to lessen the distance between it and the rescuer. One of the small boats from a dahabi-yeah nearer the scene of the accident had immedi-

ately started out to render assistance to the two unfortunates in the river. Consequently Arthur Bevan and his now unconscious charge were hauled into the small boat and soon carried over to the *Khedive*.

Many outstretched hands assisted the sailors in lifting Mathilde up on the deck; then Bevan was the center of glad congratulations. Mr. Dalken did not forget the native boys who had acted so quickly in the rescue work, and rewarded them generously.

Mr. Stackley took possession of his darling, and sobbed while he held her to him, calling upon her to open her eyes and speak.

Mrs. Dalken saw her patient was reviving, but she dared not leave her to go to help with Mathilde. But the young hero of the moment, feeling that he had something to say regarding the girl he had risked his life to save, sprang over beside the grandfather, leaving numerous rivulets of water wherever he stood.

"How do you expect Mathilde to come to if

you hug her like that? Here let us roll her over and over and get the water out of her lungs!" As he spoke he caught the old man by the shoulder and swung him around.

He had not meant to be rough or rude, but the need for practical aid and action urged him. Before Mr. Stackley could object, not only Bevan but Rogers as well were at work with the girl's arms. Then Jenks and Allen came hurriedly up, carrying an empty water cask.

"Young man!" shouted the old gentleman, in a shaking voice, "if you dare hurt my darling with such brutal ways, I shall shoot you with this revolver!"

He whipped out an automatic from his hip pocket, and Mr. Dalken had to leap over and tear it from the poor, unbalanced man. Then he tried to explain to him in order to calm and soothe his temporarily insane condition.

Bevan was persuaded now to trust Mathilde to the ministrations of Jenks and Allen.

"You must go and get into dry clothes, Bev,"

suggested Rogers, seeing his chum did not want to leave the group formed around the girl.

"Dry clothes be hanged!" retorted Bevan impatiently. "I'm more concerned in seeing the girl I loved thousands of years ago open her eyes and recognize me now."

In spite of the anxiety and desire to show their sympathy for the star member of the short drama, every one but the grandparents had to laugh at such words. Mr. Stackley's irresponsible mind fastened to the speech nevertheless, and he turned suddenly and replied indignantly, in a most melodramatic way:

"Sir! How dare you infer that my grandchild loved you thousands of years ago? How dare you think she will love you now?"

Arthur Bevan believed the old man's sanity had been unhinged by the shock of the accident, so he would not reply. Eleanor and Dodo smiled at what was developing into a comedy, instead of a tragedy. Polly remained seriously awaiting the results of such an unusual scene, when one almost

ignored in the general excitement decided the whole problem for Bevan.

Mrs. Alexander, armed once more with her gem-studded vial of *Sal Volatile* ran up in the midst of the group and waved one hand at the dripping hero, and the other hand at the girl stretched out upon the deck.

"I think this is the most pathetic case of true love at first sight we ever saw, or ever will see! Over there the austere, but proud old gentleman; here the poor yet upright young Yankee. There the lovely lassie who loves the brave young lover and you cruel old ogre! You are breaking her heart. If I could, I would help these two true lovers to elope and live happily ever after!" With such eloquent words Mrs. Alexander sent the "ogre" a baleful look.

During the tirade, which had attracted all attention to the speaker, Mathilde quietly regained consciousness. She must have heard and understood Mrs. Alexander's words, for she smiled faintly.

In spite of the situation, all the young people—even Arthur Bevan—laughed appreciatively at the sentiment so freely expressed. Dodo quickly added then:

“I don’t see how they can elope in the dark, Ma, with the Nile all around us.”

“Oh, well,” was the illogical reply, “they could escape some way if they wanted to.”

“Madam,” snorted Mr. Stackley, his white bushy eyebrows beetling threateningly at Mrs. Alexander, “isn’t it bad enough to find a romantic young man trying to make love to my grandchild, without your silly plans to help them elope?”

“But I am *not* helping them. I only wished I could,” remonstrated Mrs. Alexander.

Mr. Stackley and Dodo’s mother now became so involved in an argument that neither noticed Arthur Bevan as he knelt beside Mathilde and tenderly supported her head upon his arm. The other young folks squatted, or stood, in a circle around the two and provided an adequate screen from other eyes.

Mr. Dalken saw, however, and decided to keep the grandfather away. But he had not reckoned with the grandmother, who had regained full consciousness and was on her way to clasp her darling in her arms.

When she saw Mathilde so surely enjoying the pillow for her head, while the young man gazed silently into her eyes with a fatuous expression, the old lady's spine stiffened and she objected.

"Here, you young man, you forget you are not required now to hold my granddaughter! We're deeply obliged to you for your willingness to get so wet, but we can settle our indebtedness in a better way than permitting you to catch your death of cold by holding Mathilde's soaking hair on your arm."

"Madam, I am so soaked already that a few more drops of water from Mathilde's beautiful head will not matter now," said Bevan, summoning more courage to answer Mrs. Stackley in this manner than he needed to jump overboard for Mathilde.

"Come, darling," crooned the old lady, "let Granny help you to your room, where I can care for you."

"I think I had best carry her there for you," decided Bevan, preparing to take Mathilde in his arms.

"Young man, don't forget I am her guardian —not you!" exclaimed Mrs. Stackley.

"Oh, I am not forgetting that," returned Bevan. "But I also remember that ages ago I was more than a legal guardian. We do not recollect knowing you at that time."

"Piffle!" was Mrs. Stackley's disgusted expression. "Such nonsense. Just because an Arab fortune-teller mesmerized you both, Mathilde talks of nothing now but that old scarab in the jewel-box at home."

"I really think, friends," said Mrs. Dalken at this moment, "that these two victims of a free bath in the Nile will have most unromantic head colds unless they immediately go take a stiff rub-down with turkish towels and drink a hot lemon-

ade. Time enough to talk after they have changed into dry clothes."

As usual Mrs. Dalken had her way, and the controversy over scarabs ended for the day.

CHAPTER XII

ROMANCE ON THE NILE

HERODOTUS says that Egypt is the gift of the Nile. But Bevan found that the Nile was giving him a rarer gift than land—it was the means of helping him with his love affair with Mathilde.

Although Mr. and Mrs. Stackley suspected that their darling felt more than a friendly interest in this “bold” young American, they could not detect the slightest sign to give them cause to object. But then these two elderly people were not able to compete in such a match with the band of young romantics, all of whom were determined to help the two young lovers in plotting.

Consequently Bevan’s courtship made vast strides during this voyage on the Nile. Whenever the tourists went ashore to visit a tomb or a temple, the two would pair off and do their sight-

seeing unmolested by argus-eyed Granny Stackley, or eagle-eyed Granddaddy. The other young folks, being sympathetic and eager to participate in this "first aid to lovers," played their parts skilfully, so that the elder Stackleys never dreamed what was the fact when the merry young friends usually separated from the older members in the party. It was a case of "where ignorance was bliss, 'twas folly to be wise."

Thus the dwarf *Pyramid of Maydoom*, the *Tombs of the Ancients*, the famous *Gorge of Gebel-abu-Feda* were visited, and the two sweethearts carried away happy memories. In Assiut's thronged bazaars Bevan found an ancient ring, with which he planned to win Mathilde's promise to wed him some day. He kept the beautiful ring in his vest pocket, where it constantly reminded him to look out for a romantic place in which to slip the emblem upon his love's finger.

But time passed swiftly now. The tourists visited the marble *Temple of Seti*, the magnificent *Temple of Dendera*, and at last arrived at Luxor,

a voyage of 450 miles from Cairo, and the ring still burned impatiently in Bevan's pocket, awaiting its proper and advantageous time to change places.

Amin advised his patrons to take plenty of time now to visit the vast museum of antiquities scattered over the Theban plain at Luxor. So they went to see the Colossi of Memnon, and the Rameseum, ruins of the grand palaces of Rameses. They took pictures of the temples of Karnak, Luxor, Koornah; and, in fact, used up reels of film on this wonderland for sight-seers.

"One thing I am keen to visit," said Polly, one evening, when tired eyes and footsore limbs barely managed to obey the wills of the owners and carry them back to the dahabiye for the night, "is the old tomb of King Tut-anh-amen, which was discovered a few years ago."

"We'll go there last," said Amin. "For tomorrow I have planned Karnak, and then you shall see your desire demonstrated."

The most marvelous palaces and ruined temples

the world has account of had been visited. Their titanic proportions and architectural beauties bewildered these interior decorators, but they got snap-shots of everything worth looking at at some future time, and they trusted to the Kodak to refresh their fagged brain cells some day back home, when this tour seemed a dream of the past, and they had memories only of Egypt.

It was during the visit to the world-famed *Tombs of the Kings*, in the wild and barren wastes, which was Amin's next stopping-place, that Arthur Bevan found the opportunity for which he had waited so patiently. Thus he proved "that everything good comes to him who waits."

In the vast chambers of these ancient, though by no means forgotten, rulers of Egypt, cut out of solid granite mountain sides, carved and painted in some long-lost method that preserved the pigments of color to this day, the tourists sat or strolled about. The elder members in the party went on to visit the tomb of Amenhotep II,

who lies in his gorgeous sarcophagus, just as he was sepulchered there 3300 years ago.

Arthur Bevan took advantage of this separation and drew Mathilde away to see what he had discovered. As such quiet ways of dropping them had been readily understood and accepted by Polly and her friend, this occasion caused no comment.

The two lovers became so interested, not in the mummy, upon whose marble slab they sat and whispered, but in the proposal made by the young man, and blushingly received by Mathilde, that they failed to note how time sped. Arthur had just placed the antique ring upon his sweetheart's finger, and was about to seal their secret understanding with a kiss, when a smart crack upon the back startled him.

There stood Mr. Stackley, glaring at him.

"Well, sir! Is this the way the Americans behave when a protector is out of sight?"

"I don't know why you always pick on Americans, or Yankees, as you call them, Granddaddy,"

was Mathilde's retort. "Arthur was just telling me that he was born in England, but was raised in the United States. And I confessed to him that in reality I was born in Chicago, of a Yankee mother, but had to come to you to live in England at the death of my parents. So now we both understand each other better, and you need not slur the Yankees again, for it is not including him but your own grandchild!"

The old man could not reply to this poser, but he still felt he had a cause for complaint against Bevan.

"No true gentleman of England forgets the rights of a guardian, where a young lady is concerned," said he, with pompous dignity.

"Well, then," agreed the young man meekly, "suppose we let by-gones be by-gones, and from now on I'll start a new page in my behavior."

Mr. Stackley was so taken by surprise that he had no ready answer. Mathilde demurely answered for him.

"I'm sure Daddy will be relieved to have it so.

Anyway, he is happy to know you are his countryman, and not a despised Yank."

Then the old man stammered, "Sir, my child takes too much for granted. She has no call to say that I despise the Yankees. I realize that they are younger sons of John Bull, and as such have a claim on a Briton's hospitality."

By this time the sun had set and the sounds of hustle and visiting had died away. Luna was sailing up from the horizon when the three emerged from the impressive temple. It was necessary for Mr. Stackley to go first, and the two to follow took momentary advantage of his turned back and exchanged the long delayed kiss. Then they clasped hands in mutual understanding, and finally hastened after the stern old man.

The dahabiye continued leisurely on its course, stopping at the Temple of Esneh, Edfu and Kom Ombo, and at last the tourists reached Assuan, which was declared to be the most beautiful.

"I think such praise is too weak for so wonderful a spot," remarked Bevan.

"It is the loveliest place in the world," declared Mathilde enthusiastically.

The others smiled, for they understood the reason for such words. The elder Stackleys had remained on the boat that day, and the two sweethearts made the most of such freedom. On the way back to the *Khedive*, Polly spoke teasingly.

"If we were to ask Bev what he saw to-day, he could only tell us of one attraction."

The others laughed, and Eleanor retorted, "It wouldn't be you, Poll!"

"Oh, I know that!" agreed Polly, "nor would it be any antique."

"I'll bet a dollar to a doughnut," said Bevan, in self-defence, "if this Tom Latimer, or Paul Stewart were here, the rest of us would never have the benefit of your company."

Mr. Dalken laughingly replied, "If I was sure the doughnut would be one of the good old New England kind, I'd pay the dollar for the doughnut."

"Goodness, Dalky!" exclaimed Dodo, "that sounds as though you were wearying of Egypt, and longed to be back home."

"I'll confess that I'm 'wearying' of so much Oriental food. How many here would enjoy a regular Yankee meal?"

Before anyone could reply Eleanor demanded, "Do you mean at home, or here?"

"Why in New York, of course," replied the host.

To his surprise there was no eager response to this, and he laughed. "I see now that you have become spoiled for a nice restful life back home. You all have the 'go' fever well developed."

"We certainly have, Dalky, just so long as there is aught to be seen on this wonderful earth," declared Polly.

"Then I will resign my job of being conductor at once," returned Mr. Dalken, "for I have no desire to keep on globe-trotting all my days, and perhaps keep it up through many future lives."

"There, now!" cried Eleanor exultantly, "we

made you admit that Amin's belief in reincarnation has converted you. You just spoke of coming back in new lives."

"Oh, no, I didn't!" contradicted Mr. Dalken.
"I never thought of coming back here."

"Where else would you go?" asked Dodo.

"Perhaps to Mars or the Moon. Or perhaps, who knows, down below to the Maracot Deep, that Conan Doyle wrote about."

Polly laughed and murmured for all to hear, "I've heard Dad tell of another place below, that old time religion taught."

During the laughter at their host's expense Bevan and Mathilde stole away. At the other end of the dahabiye they found a secluded spot where they sat and planned.

Bevan wanted to tell Mathilde's guardians that they were engaged. Also he wished to have his darling agree to marry him in Cairo on their return from this voyage.

Now Mathilde was delighted to hear him plan this way, but she had been taught and trained by

her old-fashioned Grandma that it was unlady-like and "forward" to be candid and frank. Therefore she smiled demurely and refused to express an opinion. Arthur Bevan was disappointed.

"Don't you love me enough to leave your Grandparents and go to America with me?" asked he fearfully.

The tone of his voice struck dismay to Mathilde's heart, and she replied:

"Oh, yes, Bev dearest! But I had not thought of marrying for a long time yet."

"Why not?" demanded he. "You are old enough to know your own mind, and I know of nothing to prevent it."

"Well, but—" stammered Mathilde, "I am afraid Grandmother and Daddy will cause a dreadful scene."

"Naturally, because they love you so selfishly that they would keep you forever tied to them. It is because intuitively they fear I shall separate them from their idol that they treat me as they

do. Everyone in our crowd understands, even as I do, and so we make allowances for them.

"But all that can be decided after our wedding, dearest. It may be that you will elect to go to New York with the Dalken party on their yacht, which will sail from Cairo, go through the Mediterranean, and then cut across the Atlantic."

"No, I do not think I would care to spend my honeymoon in a crowd of friends. I want you to myself—and that would be impossible with such a merry party as the *Atlanta* will carry home."

"We will arrange all that just as you like, darling," promised the lover eagerly. "Only say that I may speak to your two grandparents, and the rest will take care of itself."

Mathilde finally capitulated, because she had decided to do so all along. Then Bevan suddenly felt he was in the Seventh Heaven. And in this state he ran to find the Stackleys to prepare them for a wedding as soon as the party returned to Cairo.

All the remonstrances and threats from the two

old people failed to dampen the spirits of their associates. For, during the interview Arthur Bevan had had with Mathilde's guardians, she approached the Dalkens boldly and announced the plan just decided upon.

The congratulations from the older friends and the joyful planning of the younger set finally persuaded Mr. and Mrs. Stackley that their precious protégée had not made so sad a choice for a life-mate after all.

CHAPTER XIII

FAREWELL TO EGYPT

THE tourists had visited the famous granite quarries; had gone to take pictures of the half submerged walls of ancient Philæ; had seen the wonderful dam that stores the waters of the Nile to provide ample moisture in Lower Egypt in times of low water of the river; and then they continued on to Halfa—the trip through part of Nubia, with its famous desert.

It was during a short camel trip into the orange-colored vastness of the Nubian desert that Bevan and Mathilde conceived the idea of spending their honeymoon in Fayume, the wonderful oasis in the Tibyan desert, fifty miles from Cairo. Such a trip would be taken on camels and would need from a week to eight days to make it.

“We can return to Cairo by train from Medi-

net-el-Fayum," said Mathilde, reading from the prospectus she had found in the salon of the boat.

"It will be wonderful—we two alone on such a camping trip," sighed her fiancé.

"But there would be the camel drivers, and the guide," suggested his darling.

"True, but they wouldn't understand English, and anyway, we needn't mind them any more than we would mind the camels, or the stars in the night sky."

When the betrothed pair announced later that immediately following the wedding in Cairo they planned to take a camel trip into the desert for a week, the Stackleys gasped in sheer horror.

"What is this generation coming to, I wonder?" exclaimed the grandmother fearfully.

"Just where you and Granddad arrived, only you've forgotten about it," laughed Mathilde.

But the other young folks in the Dalken party thought the idea most thrilling and "spliffy"—so said Eleanor.

Poor Ed Rogers had felt lost since his pal Bev

had devoted himself so completely to Mathilde but he soon found consolation in trying to start a mild flirtation with Polly. Failing in this, he tried Dodo. But she never encouraged such foolishness; and at last he found Eleanor more gracious. In fact, she said to Polly, "The poor boy needs the tender ministrations of someone, since Bev has left him without a friend."

"Pooh!" scorned Polly. "Can't he solace himself with Jenks and Allen, to say naught of us girls, without inviting you to play at love-making with him?"

"But, you see, Poll, this climate and the lazy life we lead on the Nile is too perfect for sweethearts to let the golden chance slip by. I really am out of practise with a beau, and I may not know how to act when I meet Paul again," laughed Eleanor.

"You make me tired!" was the disgusted reply from her chum. "It would serve you good and right if Paul Stewart married a dark-eyed señorita in Colombia."

"In that case see how wise of me to have provided consolation in having Rog on hand," retorted Eleanor laughingly.

Her ready excuse drove Polly away in high disapproval of such behavior; but Eleanor laughed merrily and flirted the more.

Although Mathilde and young Bevan had thought how romantic a honeymoon on a camping trip into the desert would be, they were finally persuaded to postpone such an experience to the time when they might visit Egypt again. It was Amin who changed their minds. But he never confessed how old Mr. Stackley paid him handsomely to impress the two romancers with the trials they would be sure to meet on a lonely tour such as they planned.

"First, you have no conception of the muscular reaction you will feel after a day on camel back. The motion starts up those muscles and nerves generally unused by civilized ways and modern exercises.

"Then you should consider the lack of all con-

veniences for rest, or for toilet accommodations. Even the meals cooked by an Arab out on the desert will not taste good to you. The sand fleas that will feast royally on your blood, which will entice them from the shaggy camel's wool where they live and breed prolifically, will be the greatest curse to you of the thin white skins!"

At this mental picture Mathilde cried, "Oh, Bev! we never thought of the fleas! And I experience such annoyance from a flea. At home, when Granny's old Pom has any I am certain to attract them to myself. And then I am in agony!"

"If that be so, dearest, we cannot possibly dream of a camel-trip," said Bevan anxiously.

"No, we'd better not," agreed Mathilde; so Amin went back to his anxious employers and reported that the "fleas" turned the trick.

Having "done the Nile" and seen all that the guide had to suggest, the Dalken party said they would return to Cairo.

The voyage down was completed in an incredibly short time, in comparison to the length

of time spent in cruising along leisurely from Cairo to Halfa.

But Amin was not through yet with his "American gold-mine." After reaching Cairo, he hinted that a trip to the oases of Khargeh and Dakhleh was the proper thing to do, in winding up so complete a visit to Egypt.

Mathilde said she would have her hands full for the time in getting ready for her wedding. But she would really prefer having her friends go on this desert trip and leave her more uninterrupted time to her planning.

Thus it came about that Polly and her friends enjoyed the novel experience of camping in the desert on their trip to the oases, rightly named "Islands of the Blest," and the Stackleys remained in Cairo and completed hurried arrangements for a wedding.

"That was some ceremony!" exclaimed Eleanor, as the group crowded around the new bride and congratulated her and Bevan.

"And to think it all came about through a scarab!" added Polly musingly.

"I should give credit to the old Arab fortuneteller at Heliopolis," said Rogers.

"Say folks!" laughed Dodo. "What say if we all pay him another visit and see if he can tell Bev is now an old married man, and that Mathilde has found her affinity?"

The suggestion met with a hilarious reception, and it was planned to take this unusual wedding-outing that night.

Back again in the Arab's tent, the same group sat in a semi-circle, but now they faced a different sooth-sayer. He gazed silently at each one, then smiled and designated Bevan at one end of the line, and Mathilde, who sat between Polly and Eleanor at the other end of the line. The girls exchanged knowing glances.

"You two sit next," remarked the Arab. "Dat is how you like." Then he paused a moment before adding, "Congrat'late! Marry only six hour, huh?"

His hearers smiled but were amazed.

"Wall,—you be happy. Allays in many lifes you two seek each odder, but no find until dis time. Now you finish hunt."

Again there was a pause, then he said, "Lee'l bride, you open box in Inglish and take out stone. Him scarab mate to one on your finger now. I know!"

After this he turned to Eleanor, "You marry soon, too, eh! Lem see: one, two, t'ree weeks: yes, in t'ree weeks you see Powl again; and quick you make wedding party."

To Polly he said, "Tom come home and lak you mak two weddings one time. But no! You no ready yet. You fin' a big joy in new fre'n. She come from far away, and her soul sing so fine, she mak everone sing too."

To Dodo he said: "Mebbe Peter say, come, we marra when Powl do. But your fadder down in hot countree say, 'No, Dodo; wait for me to come?' And you wait."

To the others in the group he gave remarkable

messages. He told Mr. Dalken that the Colombian mines were going to prove the richest investment he ever made.

To Mrs. Dalken he gave a lengthy description of how her good-for-nothing first husband went to South America and there contrived to swindle a group of men. How he journeyed into the mountains of Colombia and then deserted his followers, to sneak back to Cartagena, withdraw the funds from the bank and escape with his booty. The Arab concluded by saying, "But he now pay mooch price, and you vera happy. Soon you have so sweet a girl come live wid you dat you forget so bad a man as Curtney."

The way the Arab gave names and places and dates completely puzzled his clients. After he had prophesied a pleasant future for Rogers, Jenks and Allen, he ended. He had not spoken one word to Mr. and Mrs. Stackley, but he explained this by saying to Mathilde: "Yor guardies not like Arab talk so. I nevar spik my trut' to disbelievers, unnerstan'?"

Mathilde nodded her head, and all left the tent.

Outside once more Mrs Stackley complained, "The old rascal! I was dying to have him say you would live in England."

Her new grandson-in-law laughed:

"Maybe that is why he said nothing to you. He was too polite to hurt your feelings by saying we are bound for the United States."

"But I can see too, Granny," said Mathilde. "And I prophesy that you and Grandaddy will be living in New York too, very soon."

A snort from the tall old man was her only reply.

That night at the hotel, Mr. Dalken announced that Captain Hall had reported the *Atlanta* to be in fine shape for the skip, hop and jump across the seas to New York.

So here we say farewell for a time, but will renew our friendship in the next book called "Polly's New Friend."

THE END

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